

THINGS NEW AND OLD

REV. E. P. HERBRUCK.



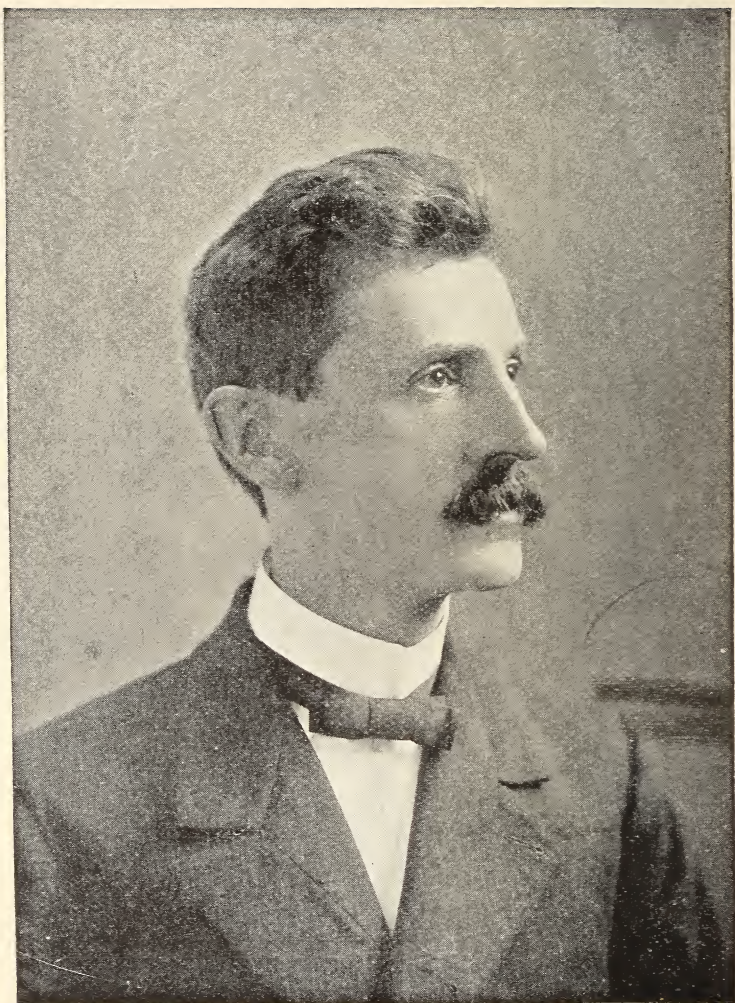
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THINGS NEW AND OLD

SERMONS

✓ BY

E. P. HERBRUCK,

PASTOR OF TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH, CANTON, OHIO



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BY

E. P. HERBRUCK.

TO
THE OFFICE-BEARERS AND
MEMBERS OF TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH
THIS VOLUME
IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED BY THE
AUTHOR.

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“And in the days of these Kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”—DANIEL II: 44.

THINGS NEW AND OLD.

I.

THE OUTLOOK OF THE WORLD.

IT is our humble belief that the world is slowly but surely growing better. This hopeful view, it is likely, some of our hearers do not share. And such are not without grounds for their position. In some respects the world is getting both better and worse. There is upon earth a kingdom of evil and a kingdom of good. Both are expansive and growing. This appears from Christ's parable of the wheat and the tares. The great lord of the field has said, "Let both grow together until the harvest; the harvest is the end of the world." The tares become ranker as the wheat matures. Wickedness committed in the clearer light of conquering Christianity is bolder and more heinous. Education and culture make

the villain more crafty and successful. The present fierce opposition to Christianity is explained by the fact that the gospel is winning victories. A weak and dying cause would not stir up its enemies to such activity. Holiness and sin, good and evil, are side by side. Each is advancing and the contest between them will continue until the end of the world. "Of the increase of his kingdom and peace there shall be no end." And also, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Yet it appears to us that the good is gradually gaining upon the evil, and beginning to assert its power with an emphasis that finally, at the second coming of Christ, will amount to a complete triumph.

The future of the world is dependent upon the future of Christianity. Outside of religion there is no hope for the race. The outlook of the world is substantially identical with the outlook of Christianity. And the only data for determining the future of Christianity are furnished by its past record and its present condition. It is impossible to read the history of the Christian religion without being impressed with its remarkable vitality and marvelous

growth. Its unexampled success in the first centuries of its existence, without the aid of learning or political favor, but against their united opposition, is ample surety that no human or satanic power can become sufficiently strong to overwhelm it. Its survival of the corruptions that grew out of the unholy alliance of the church with political power, its effective protest against the evils that had stealthily crept into its organization during the darkness of the Middle Ages, is an earnest of future victory over all opposing forces from within and from without. Only a divine religion could pass safely through such struggles and successfully combat the gigantic forms of vice and error that have appeared. We cannot conceive of any storms so violent as to wreck this ship of church and baffle its divine pilot. Judging the future from the past, we are led to believe that Christianity will continue dominant in the world and that it will make other and still greater triumphs. That the church of Christ, with its elevating and ennobling influences, is going forth "conquering and to conquer," is not simply a matter of opinion, but a matter of promise and a matter of fact.

I. Statistics, so far as they are available, show an encouraging growth on the part of the church. At the close of the first century there were 500,000 Christians in the world; at the close of the tenth, 50,000,000; at the close of the nineteenth, 400,000,000. These figures, of course, are a mere approximation to the actual facts; yet they are interesting and instructive. Plainly as a finger-post they point to the time when the Holy Spirit shall descend upon every land, and "the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed;" when it shall be said, "Who shall count the dust of Jacob or the number of the fourth part of Israel?"

Of all religious statistics available, those relative to our own country are the most complete, and naturally of the most interest to us. In the year 1800 there was, according to Dorchester, one communicant to every ten of the country's population; and in the year 1890, according to the government census, there was one communicant to every three of the inhabitants. During the decade from 1880 to 1890, the increase in the population was 29 per cent. and the increase in church membership 46

per cent.; so that the increase in church membership was 17 per cent. greater than that of the population. The total number of communicants in the country to-day is 20,488,670, and the religious population at least 46,000,000. This indicates an enormous growth, and does not quite accord with the representations, nor substantiate the fears of those who believe that everything is going to the bad until the Lord shall appear in the great glory of his second coming, to establish his reign on earth. With all the assaults of vice and unbelief, the Christian church, as represented by the evangelical denominations, is making rapid and substantial gains.

II. Another indication that the church is growing and will continue to grow, is the interest and activity manifested in the work of missions. This is the century that has witnessed the revival of missions by which the American churches support almost as many teachers and missionaries in foreign lands as pastors at home. This is the century that has seen conquests of the gospel as great and far-reaching as those of all previous centuries com-

bined. A remarkable enthusiasm has been enkindled on this important subject, and it is constantly on the increase. As an illustration of this unparalleled zeal, there is a single church in the city of New York (that of the Rev. A. B. Simpson), a church with no rich men in its membership, that sends out this year 100 foreign missionaries, and has contributed in the past six months \$118,500 toward furthering the Gospel in heathen lands. We are certain the record of missionary benevolence from the time of the Apostle Paul to the present day has nothing to compare with this.

In the early ages Christianity had devotees who became martyrs in defense of its existence; in the present age it has a noble galaxy of martyrs in propagating its principles. Our missionaries, Williams and Patteson, who were eaten by the cannibals of the South Sea Islands, are worthy a place by the side of Polycarp and Phocus.

Our zeal and heroism now manifested in spreading the gospel of Jesus, is equal to that of the first Christians in retaining their belief in it. I have profound reverence for the solitary and friendless Christian who stood in the

arena, calmly waved a last farewell to old Cæsar, and then engaged in bloody contest with man or beast until he sank lifeless in the dust, yielding himself a witness to Christ and a sacrifice to Roman depravity; but not less worthy of our reverence and gratitude are the men who have lately laid down their lives for Christ in foreign lands.

A company of English soldiers, captured during the Sepoy rebellion in India, were offered the alternative of renouncing the Christian religion and embracing that of the rebels, or being murdered by all the horrible ways that the hate and rage of the heathen could invent. They died to a man as Christians. Does the history of the church present anything more brave and heroic? With the present spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice, what a glorious prospect opens up to Christianity! With the present missionary enthusiasm and mode of working, we have no doubt that the time will soon be at hand when "earth's remotest nations shall hear Messiah's name."

III. The condition and work of the Sunday School augurs well for the future of the church

and the race. It has reached a stage approaching perfection. The first Sunday School of the present kind was founded only one hundred and thirteen years ago; yet it has become a powerful auxiliary to the church. The best talent and intelligence of the age are brought to bear upon the rising generation through the Sunday School. An army of pious, consecrated men and women are devoting their best efforts to the religious instruction of the young. The Bible is now studied by about ten million children in the Sunday Schools of our land alone. Every possible art and appliance that the modern mind can invent are brought into requisition in the work of simplifying and making plain the truth of God and instilling it into the heart of the scholar. The Sunday School has in its service a teaching corps of almost equal ability to that of the secular school and of greater consecration. Without the aid of the public purse, it has at its disposal one million officers and teachers of the highest type of manhood and womanhood. It communicates instruction of the highest order, because the love of Jesus and the love of souls enlists talent which no mercenary consideration could secure.

The influence which this instruction must have upon the coming generation should do much toward quieting our anxieties about the future of the race.

IV. The result of every assault upon Christianity, whether made in the name of science, philosophy or history, is a prophecy of what will occur hereafter. The fact that theories hostile to Christianity, and put forth with the utmost assurance of their authors, have been speedily abandoned, is a strong indication that the human mind is not satisfied with the husks of philosophy, and that the best thought of the age is drifting toward the one who is the truth and the life. The enemies of religion have striven among themselves and fiercely demolished one another. According to an ancient fable, when Cadmus had sown the dragon's teeth and they sprang up an army of giants out of the ground, he took a rock and threw it among them. The result was that, instead of slaying him, they went to fighting one another, until only one tall giant remained, and he became the helper of Cadmus in carrying stones to build the walls of the city of Thebes. In

this way the enemies of Christ have killed the theories of one another and their contention has only resulted in strengthening the walls of the Master's Kingdom. The theory of the rationalistic Paulus was soon displaced by that of the critical Strauss, who, in his latest writings, severely chastised his opponent, and with telling irony and caustic sarcasm assailed the position held by the whole modern school of rationalists. The theory of Strauss was in turn destroyed by that of the æsthetic Rénan. The theory of Rénan again has fallen to pieces of its own inconsistencies.

Voltaire said in one hundred years the Bible will be forgotten. The one hundred years are past, but the Bible is not quite forgotten. The Geneva Bible Society is using his printing press in its work of publishing the Word of God, and at least two hundred million copies of the Bible have been printed in the last one hundred years. During the past year the American Bible Society alone has published thirteen thousand copies of the Bible every ten hours of the day. Gibbon labored earnestly to overthrow Christianity; yet to-day Gibbon's hotel at Lake Lemman contains a room where

Bibles are sold. Chesterfield's parlors, formerly an infidel club room, echoing with profanity and raillery at the Christian religion, is now a vestry where the groans and prayers of the penitent go up to God. Tom Paine declared that he had gone through the forests of the Bible and hewn down the trees one by one with the ax of reason. If Paine were to rise from the shades of death, he would find those trees towering heavenward, more thrifty and fruitful than ever.

V. The confirmation of the truth and accuracy of the Scriptures furnished by modern archæological discoveries gives added strength to the Christian religion. The records and relics dug up from the ruins of ancient tombs and cities corroborate many of the disputed declarations of Sacred Writ. Before any effective explorations were made in the East, the external evidences of the genuineness of the Scripture were few indeed, and we had little to substantiate the Biblical histories, but when the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates began to reveal the secrets which had so long been hidden under the dust of the ages, and

the stones of Canaan and Syria began to speak out, we had what all Biblical students had been longing for. The historical intelligence gained by Oriental exploration confirms beyond cavil the reliableness of the Scripture record, and knocks some of the wild and radical theories of infidel critics into pieces so fine that they cannot be swept up with a broom. It is no longer safe for any student to make a statement destructive to the Biblical record, for the very next spade turned by the archæologist may expose his ignorance, and sustain the correctness of the Scriptures. This unquestionable confirmation of Bible history is the source of much strength to the Christian religion, and gives valuable support to its claim on universal acceptance.

VI. The popularity of the Gospel is also a very encouraging sign of the times. Never since the time when the first message of hope was uttered in Eden has the Gospel received so large and intelligent a hearing as it does to-day. It has been said by the pessimist that the average man of this age hates the preacher and his preaching. I call the state-

ment in question. There may be a certain perverted form of the message that is repulsive to many of the men of our day; but the message as it is proclaimed in its bright and hopeful form by McLaren, and Storrs, and Talmage, and Moody, and thousands of others is not only not repulsive to the spirit of the age, but on the other hand is quite attractive. The immense audiences that flock to hear these men, and the remarkable enthusiasm created by them is something unparalleled in the history of the church. The fifty million dollars paid annually to the one hundred thousand ministers of this country are strongly expressive of the faith and interest of the people in the message they proclaim.

VII. Another indication of the progress of Christianity is the liberality of its devotees. No equal number of persons can anywhere be found so firmly devoted to any hero or principle as the disciples of Christ are to him and his gospel. No charitable or scientific society receives the attention and support from its members that the church receives from Christians. No distinctly humanitarian organization

can command half the friends the church has at its disposal. Generous gifts are laid upon the altar of the sanctuary. The widow does not withhold her mite, nor the rich man his abundance. The rapid accumulation of wealth by individuals may be one of the evils of the times from a sociological standpoint, but if that wealth is properly used, it converts the evil into a blessing. When I consider the princely munificence which many of fortune's favorites have been able to exercise toward the church and other benevolent institutions, I feel less inclined to criticise the financial inequalities so perplexing to the sociologist. One person now does with a single donation what formerly required many persons and many years to do. Christian liberality erects the most costly structures on earth to the service of God, and furnishes every conceivable means and appliance for facilitating the spread of the Gospel.

VIII. The Bible is read by a larger proportion of the world's population now than in any previous age. In 1802, when the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed, there was a great distribution of the Bible in all

countries. It had then been printed and circulated in only forty-seven languages and dialects; but since that time more than 200,000,000 Bibles, New Testaments and portions of the Bible have been issued. The Scriptures are now circulated among nearly all the nations of the earth, and in more than two hundred and fifty different languages. The heathen are eagerly reaching out for the heavenly message; and Christian people are reading it quite as reverently as ever, and with probably a more intelligent and correct interpretation than in former times. Significant upon this point is the fact that on the first day the revised version of the New Testament was placed on the market, one publishing house in New York sold a quarter of a million copies before three o'clock in the afternoon. This is certainly indicative of the intense interest taken in the grand old Bible. Popular as many books have been, no such record of one day's sale has ever been made before. Colonel Ingersoll and other infidels have bitterly assailed the New Testament with wit and ridicule, and have loudly asserted that it is losing its hold upon the people. But these unprecedented sales do

not confirm that assertion. People are not simply reading, but studying the word of God in the light of the nineteenth century. It cannot be otherwise than that this thoughtful, yet devout, use of the Scriptures will have an elevating effect on the race.

IX. There are millions of men and women of at least average intelligence, who firmly believe that Christianity affords them the only adequate comfort in sorrow and the only hope for the future. To these the religion of the Nazarene is precious above all mundane treasures. They cherish it fondly as a sacred and invaluable heritage, and would be slow to relinquish possession of it. Napoleon had his "Old Guard" ready to die, but not to surrender. Jesus has his followers who, rather than see his name perish from the earth, would dip their fingers in their own blood and write it upon the heavens. The unquenchable ardor and devotion of millions of Christians must prove an invincible defense of the cause of righteousness, and will perpetuate with ever increasing power the religion of Christ among men.

Christianity is certainly more firmly established now than ever before; its influence is wider and its promise of future advancement better. Along with this religious progress there has been a corresponding progress in morals. That the world has improved in its ethical condition will scarcely admit of a doubt. Yet whatever progress has been made in this sphere must be credited mainly to the influence of Christianity. All moral reforms hitherto effected are of Christian parentage. Though godless men, in the pride of their unbelief, have endeavored to trace the lineage of modern ethical progress to a different source, the judgment of impartial and thorough scholars connects it with religion. History and recent experience have demonstrated that reforms must take their place under the banner of the cross if they would march to victory. The two are cause and effect. A growing religion necessarily produces an improved morality.

It may be encouraging to notice a few of the triumphs achieved in this realm, some of them within the memory of the "oldest inhabitant."

I. An improvement has been made in the matter of temperance. While it is to be regretted that the methods of campaign against intoxicating liquors have been wild and spasmodic in many quarters, yet it cannot be denied that much good has been done. Prohibitory laws have been enacted and are reasonably well enforced in several states. By reason of the constant agitation of this burning question drunkenness has come to be regarded a disgrace. Many, no doubt, recollect the time when intoxication was considered somewhat excusable on the plea of respectability. That time has passed by. Neal Dow, the venerable prohibitionist of Maine, expressed himself as follows in a recent issue of the *Independent*: "My knowledge of the drinking habits of the people goes back beyond fifty years. I very well remember when this habit was almost universal among all classes of society. It may be said to have been quite universal among mechanics and other workingmen. I remember when the town bell, which rang at seven in the morning, at noon and at nine o'clock at night, was also rung at eleven in the forenoon and at four in the afternoon to call workingmen to

their 'grog' which was considered a necessity among working people.

"At the same time the drink custom was universal among the upper classes of society. Always, when calling at the houses of such people, whether socially, ceremoniously or on business, the first thing after the greeting was an invitation to the sideboard 'to take something.' Whether the caller were the pastor, the doctor, the stranger or neighbor, the invitation and the drink were never omitted.

"In those days of liquors at public as well as social gatherings, alcoholics were always present, with boisterousness, coarseness and even vulgarities. Excess to the extreme was not considered a reproach to any gentleman. I have seen such persons leap upon the table at such feasts and dance a 'jig' there, making all the bottles, decanters and glasses join in the fun. I have seen six gentlemen doing this at one time on a long table—a few ladies and many other gentlemen being present. All these habits and customs are gone now; they were dismissed years ago from all circles of which I have any knowledge."

The disgust of all moderate people with in-

ebriety has never been more thorough. The hard drinker must now bear the brand of a social outcast. Bibulous dissipation is no longer condoned by the respectable as it used to be. The effects of temperance work are felt in the highest ranks of society as well as in the lowest. The "gilt-edged" grog shop that once flourished in the basement of the capitol and furnished the inspiration for senatorial eloquence has been abolished. A recent president of the United States was brave enough to violate foreign court etiquette, and the custom of his predecessors, by removing the wine cup from the White House table at state dinners. Many fashionable people have made the new departure of showing hospitality without offering intoxicating drinks. The bench, the bar, and the senate are not so frequently degraded by drunken incumbents as they once were. A smaller proportion of prominent political characters go to a drunkard's grave than formerly. The fact that physicians are compelled to designate diseases resulting from intemperance by some obscure, scientific name shows the drift of public sentiment.

II. Not many years ago the lottery was a popular institution. From the earliest settlement of the country it has been a familiar means of raising funds for various charitable purposes. Colleges have been founded, libraries established, and hospitals erected by the aid of this game of chance. Very near all the states of the Union have, at some period of their history, employed lotteries as a means of revenue. But, though they supply a ready mode of replenishing the public treasury, they have always been found to exert a mischievous influence upon the people. The hope of sudden and splendid gains, the prospect of getting something for nothing, divert the attention of the masses from their usual labor and occupation, and make them restless and adventurous. These schemes once enjoyed a fair reputation; now they are condemned. Every state has abolished them and the Government has made it a penal offense to send lottery advertisements through the mails.

III. Fifty years ago duelling was a common practice in this country. In those days the "code of honor" was in full force. Some of

our greatest men had not the power to resist it. The noble Hamilton lost his life in combat with Aaron Burr, vice president of the United States. Barron fought with Decatur, Clay fought with John Randolph, Jackson fought with Dickinson. These "affairs" were of frequent occurrence in the earlier years of this century. Now they are rare. Southern chivalry, in foolish imitation of foreign manners, furnishes the few we now hear of. The verdict of popular opinion is that he who refuses to fight a duel is a moral hero, and that he who kills another in a duel is a murderer.

IV. The present century has witnessed the noblest manifestations of Christian sympathy and aid. On the fatal night of October 8, 1871, Chicago was visited with one of the most destructive conflagrations of modern times. The greater part of the city was destroyed. Two hundred million dollars' worth of property was licked up by the hungry flames. One hundred and sixty thousand people were homeless, shelterless, and without provisions. This dread calamity sent a thrill

of sympathy through all of this country, and through all of Europe. From all parts of the world messages of aid and encouragement came in. Whole trains of clothing and food were sent from our larger cities to shield the unfortunate against cold and starvation. In a few days seven million dollars in money, and almost unlimited provisions and articles of clothing were contributed to the relief of the sufferers. What a beautiful testimony to the brotherly love that now pervades the human family!

The fearful plague that in 1873 and again in 1878 scourged the South with its poisonous lash called out noble exhibitions of philanthropy and self-sacrifice. Every church in the land lifted liberal collections for the benefit of the afflicted, and sent a fervent prayer to God that he might call off the dread epidemic. Many physicians and nurses from the North hastened to the beds of the dying as ministers of mercy. Bright men and fair women laid down their lives for those who had no other claim upon them than that of a common humanity.

This manifestation of philanthropy was re-

peated after that dreadful calamity in the Conemaugh valley five years ago. As a result of heavy rains, a dam across the south fork of the Conemaugh river was carried away, and the valley engulfed with a raging flood. Johnstown and the surrounding villages were swept away, and more than six thousand persons lost their lives. The catastrophe was probably without parallel in its awful results since the days of the Noachian deluge. But aside from the mortality and its consequent sorrows, everything else has been restored again. The whole civilized world felt the shock of the disaster, and opened its purse to relieve the distress entailed by it. The disheartened citizens of the ill-fated town were so encouraged by the generous offers of substantial aid that they at once began to rebuild, and to-day nearly every trace of the flood has disappeared, and a new city* stands on the site of the old. With such repeated evidences of love to mankind who will say the race is deteriorating?

V. There was a time, and that not far distant, when African slavery was encouraged by the

kings and parliaments of England. In 1708, the House of Commons declared by the report of a committee, that "the trade in negroes was important and ought to be free and open to all the Queen's subjects." Still later, under George II., the British Government sought in every way to foster the iniquity and "diligently checked any beginnings of virtuous action in the colonies directed against the evil." In due season the crime became thoroughly established also in the American colonies, and for decades had able defenders, both in church and state. To-day slavery has scarcely an apologist in England or America and is not tolerated in any civilized country in the world.

VI. The position and rights of woman in the not remote past were those of an inferior creature. Under the common law of England her husband, no matter how degraded he might be, could take her property and all her earnings and use them for his own base and selfish gratification. As the statute says, "He could beat his wife, though not to death, and chastise her reasonably." It was a common thing in the eighteenth century for a man to sell and deliver his

wife to another man. Parleigh's register, a historical document, speaks of a "bought wife delivered in a halter" as late as 1782. To-day, thanks to the elevating influence of Christianity, woman stands by the side of her husband, his equal and his companion, instead of his chattel.

Thus, on all moral questions and all questions coming under the head of the humanities of life, we are far in advance of bygone centuries. It does not require a parallax of more than a hundred years to demonstrate this to the complete satisfaction of any one who is not abnormally splenetic.

But some one may ask, "If the world is growing better, why do we now read in the papers of so much more wickedness than formerly?" The answer to that is easy enough. It is because of the remarkable increase in our population, which has more than doubled in the last thirty years. No special endowment of wisdom is necessary to perceive that, all things being equal, the larger the number of people, the larger the number of crimes to be expected. Another reason for this apparent increase in crime is the elevation of our moral standard, by which many offenses, formerly

winked at, are now classed as criminal. With our growing civilization comes increased severity, and in consequence, an increased number of arrests. But increased arrests and imprisonments do not necessarily mean an actual increase in vice. They may and do mean that the test of the closing nineteenth century is higher than that of former times. But, more than all, this apparent increase in crime may be attributed to the fact that every trifling offense, though committed in the remotest corner of the land, is now published in the daily journals, and nearly always with some exaggeration. This was not so in the days of our fathers. Only the particularly heinous crimes were ever heard of by them. But with the complete news service of our time, everything is brought to the public notice. A murder committed in San Francisco at midnight appears in every morning paper in the United States six hours after its committal. The story of the deed, with all its bloody details, is carried from city to city with the speed of the lightning. The next morning we read of another crime perpetrated in the pine forests of Michigan, and another in the Five Points of

New York. We forget that this is the record of 65,000,000 of people scattered over 3,500,000 of square miles, and with news and telegraphic facilities our forefathers never dreamed of.

This is what might be called, in common parlance, a fast age. Everything goes with a rush. Life is now compressed within a narrow span. This generation is shorter than any previous one; yet it has accomplished more. There has been more thought and said and done in a recent decade than in a former quarter of a century. The great hurry and bustle of our times should not be the cause of lamentation, but rather of satisfaction.

"Fifty years of Europe is better
Than a cycle of Cathay."

The crowning inventions of this age are a helpful means to its moral and religious forces. Steam, electricity, railroads, and all kindred improvements must exert, on the whole, a beneficent influence on the world at large. Though the devil is trying to control all great inventions, as a rule the good prevails; and they result in larger, freer intercourse among people, in allaying national prejudices, in encouraging allegiance to international law, and in the general

spread of the better elements of modern civilization. Steam, as applied to ships and cars, enables the ambassadors of God the more speedily to deliver their message to distant nations. The journey which, when pursued by stage and sail, required months, is now accomplished in weeks. The missionary escapes the inconveniences of former modes of travel, and rides in a moving palace to his field of labor.

Electricity, that subtle and mysterious agency, is also engaged in the service of God. On its wings of lightning it carries the glad tidings to "earth's remotest bounds." By means of it the most distant outposts are connected with the great centers and strongholds of religion. A little while ago a missionary could be eaten by cannibals, and the people of this land would not discover it for months afterward. Now such a misfortune would be known to the whole civilized world on the evening of the same day on which it occurred. Judson, that earnest laborer for God in heathen lands, was dead three months before civilized nations knew of it. With our present net work of communications, such important intelligence would

reach the eye of every reading Christian in a very short time.

The discoveries, arts, and appliances of this century have been made to subserve the wise purpose of God in furthering the cause of the Gospel. The marvelous progress made in mechanical philosophy and every department of science, is a lever with which God is raising the world, and bringing it nearer to him.

I am of the firm opinion that the world is slowly growing better. There may be times of darkness and fanaticism and retrogression when men despair; but they are always followed by increased progress. There are actions and reactions, but the general course of civilization can be well discerned. What Macaulay said of England is true of the race in general: "We have often thought the motion of the public mind resembles that of the sea when the tide is rising — each successive wave rushes forward, breaks, and rolls back; but the great flood is steadily coming in. A person who looked on the waters only for a moment might fancy they were retiring. A person who looked on them only for five minutes might fancy that they were rushing capriciously to

and fro. But when he keeps his eye on them for a quarter of an hour, and sees one sea-mark disappear after another, it is impossible for him to doubt of the general direction in which the ocean is moved." Looking only at one decade, or one quarter of a century, we might conclude that the race was going backward, but looking at its whole course, we receive a different impression.

"And, I doubt not, through the ages

One increasing purpose runs,

And the thoughts of men are widened

With the process of the suns."

“And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

“And both Jesus was called and his disciples, to the marriage.”—JOHN II: 1, 2.

II.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

WE have undertaken to speak on this subject this evening, not because we feel particularly qualified to do so, but because we feel it a duty to do so. In all the range of practical topics there is none more important than this. The choice of a companion for life is a matter of such serious moment that it deserves to be treated in the Christian pulpit from time to time. Next to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" is the question, "Whom shall I marry?" There is so much of happiness and so much of misery, so much of sin and so much of virtue depending upon the answer to this question that it ought to receive more attention than it does. It is a question for time and for eternity, a question that may either make or unmake us, and yet it is so often treated with levity and uncon-

cern. We approach it this evening with the utmost seriousness and with a full realization of its grave importance. Whatever we may say shall not be from a desire to be startling and sensational, but purely from a sense of duty. And should any word be dropped that grates harshly on the ear of one or another, we wish to assure you that it was spoken in love and not in malice.

We believe in matrimony. It is certainly a relation which God intended men to occupy, and is productive of the most genuine happiness if properly entered upon. Yet the voice of the times seems to be somewhat against it. There is a mawkish sneering at it by people who lay claim to superior intelligence. But however wise men may become, they will never get beyond the wisdom of God, who said, "It is not good that man should be alone." There may be particular marriages which are failures, but marriage itself is not. It is a divine institution, and, *unless there is some serious barrier in the way*, all people should enter its pleasant bondage.

To such who contemplate matrimony we commend the example of that young couple

referred to here in the text. They were plain people, evidently in moderate circumstances, for they did not have even sufficient refreshments to meet the demands of the wedding. But they had invited Christ, the great prophet of Nazareth, and he supplied what was lacking in provisions, and by his presence sanctified all the joy and mirth of that occasion. We do not know what became of that young couple afterwards, for none of the evangelists see fit to make any reference to them, yet we are sure that they were the better for having had the Divine Jesus at their nuptials. In this respect they established a custom which all who intend to enter the marriage relation would do well to follow. When you come to make the arrangements for your wedding, do not forget to invite this same Jesus of Nazareth. Whoever else you may omit from the list of your invitations, do not omit him. Be sure to make him chief at the feast and have nothing about the whole affair that might be in the least offensive to him. Yea, we go still further, and suggest that you ask him to assist you even in selecting a companion. Make your betrothal a matter of serious and prayerful consideration.

Remember that true marriages are formed in Heaven and that it is therefore wise to seek Heaven's guidance. We know there are people who smile at this kind of advice, but they may yet live to regret it. There is an old Russian proverb which says, "Before you go to war pray once; before you go to sea, pray twice; but before you go to be married, pray three times." It is certainly a critical period in every one's career and he may well invoke divine illumination as he passes through it. Thoughtlessness on this subject has brought disaster to many who otherwise would have been successful and happy.

Let no one think, either, that the trouble is all one-sided—that it is only the men who are cursed by matrimonial blunders. There are just as many women who have had their lives darkened by being allied with ignoble men. But between the two now, between the men who have married scolds and vixens and the women who have married hard-hearted tyrants and villains, there has been a vast amount of misery produced. There are some people who doubt the existence of a hell hereafter. We do not agree with them. But whatever may be our

views about a hell to come, we cannot doubt that there are a thousand hells on earth, hells produced by hasty and inconsiderate marriages, the most of which will never be quenched except in death. We find no pleasure in speaking of this connubial misery, but do so only to show that it exists, that there is a possibility of making a grave mistake and that, therefore, prayer and thoughtfulness are quite in order before taking the critical step.

Having given this general advice, we shall proceed to specify a few of the points included in a Christian, conscientious marriage. We do not suppose that any of our young hearers expect to get married, nevertheless, they may have a slight interest in some pastoral counsel on this subject.

I. We are sure that Christ would never advise such to marry who have no visible means of support. This does not signify that he would place an embargo on the marriage of people in moderate circumstances. His presence at the wedding in Cana of Galilee is sufficient proof that he does not discriminate against the honestly poor in this matter. It is true, however, that he does oppose a careless

rushing into matrimony without considering the question, How can we gain a livelihood, or how can we support our children, in case God should bless us with such? It is not Christian marriage for a man to take the vows without the ability to provide for a family. No conscientious person with genuine affection in his heart, will ask a woman to join him in this sacred and lasting union, without feeling that he is able to give her all proper care and attention. Not that proper matrimony implies the possession of so and so much capital. If that were the case, then thousands of people, whose only income is an annual salary, would be barred out. Capital itself might not be sufficient if there are not those other requisites, health and the ability to do something. He that is sound of limb and mind, and is capable of pursuing some legitimate occupation, will, by the help of God, be able to provide for a family, even without stocks and bonds. If, in spite of an honest effort, he afterwards comes to want, it cannot be said to be his fault, and surely God will not forsake him.

It is lamentably true, however, that in many cases even these modest prerequisites are lack-

ing. There are multitudes who are not healthy, but who contrive in some way to conceal their ailments from each other. This is a grave injustice. It is getting something under false pretenses. Health is very important to connubial happiness, and almost indispensable to temporal subsistence. Let the pronounced invalid, therefore, consider well whether he had not better remain unmarried, than to plunge both himself and his consort into almost certain wretchedness. These may seem like austere words, but they are spoken in love. We have seen so much unhappiness resulting from this cause that we cannot remain silent. It would be an unkindness to speak to young people about marriage without cautioning them to be frank with one another, and to openly confess any physical ailment which might seriously detract from their fitness for the marital state.

Almost equally as necessary as health is the ability to provide and to preside over the affairs of the household. What a pitiable weakness is displayed in this particular by the present generation. Just think of many of our young ladies and how they are being educated.

Almost everything is taught them except how to keep house or the duties of motherhood. We have not a word against the higher education of woman as long as it is combined with the necessary practical education in household affairs. We believe that woman is entitled to a larger library than the Bible and a cookery book. We believe she has a right to a wider science than "chemistry enough to keep the pot boiling, and geography enough to know the different rooms in her house." But this more liberal education ought not to be gained at the expense of domestic efficiency. Literary and scientific attainments ought not to bar out "the philosophy of the kitchen." It will hardly be questioned that the most learned woman cannot be an ideal wife unless she knows some of the details of managing a home. Of what avail are literature and music and painting unless supplemented by cooking and sewing and other useful accomplishments? They are poetical, but how about the prosaic? And there is enough of this in every household. A sensible man will want to know what his wife can do toward making him comfortable and to keep the house at a reasonable outlay.

He is interested in her skill at baking and scrubbing and in the use of the needle. We are told of a young man in Philadelphia, who, courting one of three sisters, happened to be on a visit to her, when all the three were present. While there his enamorata chanced to say to her sisters, "I *wonder* where *our* needle is." This incidental remark was full of meaning to him. As soon as consistent with politeness he withdrew from the house, resolved never to think of marrying a girl who possessed a needle only in partnership, and who, it appeared, was not very well informed as to the place where even that share was deposited. Young men very justly demand a practical education on the part of those who presume to become their wives and the mothers of their children. For of what benefit is music and painting when the food is poorly cooked, and the clothing torn and the pocketbook empty? With this concomitant condition music will soon be changed into discord and the peace of the household greatly jeopardized. If you ever hope to enter the married state, young ladies, you owe it to your future husbands to make some specific preparation for the discharge of its duties.

Just as many a young woman is deficient in this regard so also is many a young man. The number of bunglers is by no means limited, and a bungler is always a more or less doubtful provider for a household. We have often seen families in distress because the husband and father had not properly learned his trade or mastered the details of his business. A man who thinks of asking some angelic little creature to become his partner for life, ought first to acquire the ability to follow his chosen calling, and thus to provide the daily bread needed to sustain her. To be a bungler in anything is not Christian. Much less is it Christian to prevail upon some luckless damsel to join in suffering the consequences of the bungler's laziness and incapacity. Diligence and capability will always have a beneficent effect on domestic life and should, therefore, be the traits of all young men who are about to assume domestic responsibility.

II. A true Christian marriage must be a union of two who are like-minded on the subject of religion. This does not necessarily mean that both must be members of the

church, but it does mean that neither should be an infidel. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" is matrimonial advice which ought not remain unheeded. While we do not believe that church membership should be made a test of proper candidacy for matrimony, we do believe that sympathy with churches should. No person who sneers at religion and ridicules Christianity is fit to become the life companion of a Christian. It is hard to conceive how there can be the proper affection when either spits wormwood upon the faith of the other. There is nothing more sacred to a genuine Christian than his religious convictions, and it is certainly hazarding the prospect of connubial bliss to enter into a marriage relation in which those convictions will be constantly sneered at. The household peace is liable to be chronically disturbed by a radical difference on this subject. Yet on this very point there is a vast deal of thoughtlessness manifested both by young people and their parents. When a marital union is contemplated the question usually asked is not, "How will this marriage benefit me spiritually? What affect will it have on

my religion? Will I be made the better by it?" But the all absorbing-question is, "How will this marriage affect me socially? What worldly advantage will I secure thereby?" Piety and godliness are almost totally ignored and, on the other hand, temporal interests are unduly exalted. Many parents train up their children with the manifest purpose in view of securing them social position and temporal advantage. They do not stop to consider the deeper questions that lie at the foundation of human happiness. If only there is money in sight, ignorance and infidelity are winked at. Yea, even moral obliquities are tolerated when the parental eye is dazzled with glittering gold. How many a son has thus been plunged into almost hellish misery! And how many a daughter, mismated in this way, has had to come back again broken-hearted to the parental roof! There is only too much truth in the little couplet,

"In many a marriage made for gold,
The bride is bought—and the bridegroom sold."

And, alas, in too many such cases it turns out that both are *sold* in the baser sense of that word. Better leave the commercial and

social question out of view in the selection of a consort and look rather to the character. Good moral and spiritual qualities will prove far more profitable than the mere possession of wealth. Besides, if your heart is wedded to Christ you cannot consistently enter into wedlock with another who is an enemy of Christ's. This would be religious perfidy of which you cannot afford to be guilty. First and foremost, you owe loyalty to God, and it can never be to your interest to form a co-partnership which may detract from that loyalty.

III. Christian marriage should always be preceded with due deliberation and prayer. The choice of a companion is a critical thing at best, and there is no excuse for increasing the chances of failure by going into it impulsively or blindly. To marry without having had a previous acquaintance is running a great risk. Marriage is said to be a lottery, but this makes it more so than ever. It is almost foolhardy to resort to artificial means in securing a wife. There is, we believe, an institution called the matrimonial bureau. Its object is to bring people together with a view to matrimony, to pro-

vide wives for men and husbands for women, and to do it on short notice and for a reasonable compensation. That is an institution we would advise you not to patronize. You had better attend a few more Sunday School picnics or church "socials," than to pay a fee of ten or twenty dollars to be introduced to a stranger a hundred or a thousand miles away. Or, if by some strange spell you should be induced to apply to this institution, be sure that you become thoroughly acquainted with the person to whom you are referred. Do not trust to the judgment of others or to hearsay in so important a matter. You would not think of buying a farm without visiting it and making careful investigation as to its value. You would not think of accepting a deed to any property without first inquiring as to liens and incumbrances on it. You would not think of selling a bill of goods to any man without a thorough knowledge of his trustworthiness. You would not even rent a house without first looking at it. Much less should you think of entering into an eternal union with some one whom you do not know. There may occasionally a happy marriage result from such

procedure, but the chances are too few for any one to make the venture.

In some of our daily newspapers there is a column containing advertisements of a tender nature. Young men, and young women, also, ask for correspondents with a view to matrimony. Just how extensively these advertisements are answered is not in our power to know. Yet we fear that some of our young people yield to these seductive overtures, and enter into a correspondence of the most dangerous character. We know that the excuse given for this letter writing is that it is simply for amusement. Let me say to you, however, as a pastor and friend, that it is the most perilous kind of amusement in which you can indulge. It is practically an anonymous correspondence, and the writer at one end of the line does not know who is at the other. He may be the most vile and villainous person outside of the bottomless pit, and nine cases out of ten his motives are base. If you are doing any of that kind of letter writing, whether seriously or for amusement, you had better drop it at once. There may be here and there some one who is really respectable and honest in

his intentions, but the great majority of those soliciting this kind of correspondence are of no account.

Over in the city of Akron there is one of the largest match factories in the world. And the matches made there are not all parlor matches either, as we know from personal observation. A short time ago a young lady who was employed there, and who was of good name and respectable family, concluded that she would like to have a husband. She was in the packing department, and struck upon this ingenious device for attracting some one's attention. She wrote a note and put it into a box which she was packing. The substance of the note was a request for marriage with any single gentleman who might chance to get that box. After a few weeks a letter came from some one in the town of Steubenville announcing that he had received the box, and was ready to accept the inclosed proposal. A few letters were exchanged, and suddenly one day the young lady disappeared. She had gone to marry this young man—gone without the knowledge of her mother or any member of her family—gone to enter into a matrimo-

nial alliance with a total stranger, a man whom she had never seen, and of whom she did not know whether his nose was on the front or on the back of his head. What the consequence of this strange marriage was we are not able to say. But, whether it resulted favorably or not, it was a very foolish and perilous thing for a young lady to do. Matrimony is a serious thing to go into with one's eyes open, but much more so with them closed. There may be here and there a happy union effected in this way, but the majority of such "matches" are failures.

A man stopped at a house in Douglassville, Ga., the other day, and asked a lady for a glass of water. When he had quenched his thirst he asked her if she was married or single. She replied: "Widow." On which the man said he was a widower in search of a wife. "Walk in," answered the widow, "and we'll talk the matter over." One hour later the twain were made one by the nearest minister. This was very speedy work indeed, so speedy that it almost takes one's breath to read of it. But it was just as foolhardy as it was speedy, considering that neither knew

the antecedents, the character, or the disposition of the other. We should be greatly surprised if such a lightning-like conjunction would result in genuine happiness. At any rate, it is a hazard which it is needless for any one to assume. The safest course is to avoid all such irregular and sensational methods and to pursue the old and traditional way, though it may require a little more time to do it.

IV. Further, that can hardly be termed Christian marriage which is based on sensual beauty only. If you are a man and think of selecting a wife, look deeper than the surface. Do not marry mere physical grace and comeliness. A pretty face may be a "delusion and a snare" in a very literal sense. It may serve as a mask to cover up questionable qualities of mind and heart. It is desirable enough when it reflects a pleasing disposition and a pure heart, when it expresses noble traits and has a real womanly soul back of it. But if it is only a disguise, it is a very uncertain thing to fall in love with, and that love is liable to be of a very transient character. An affection based on nothing but a pretty face or a pleas-

ing form cannot be lasting, because the face will not always be pretty and the form will not always be graceful. Time will whiten the hair, and wrinkle the brow, and hollow the cheeks. It will rack the handsome form and make it angular and tottering. If, then, there was nothing to love but the fine physique and the pleasing countenance, that love is doomed to vanish.

If, however, the love is based on something deeper than the skin, on a fair character, an angelic soul and excellent qualities of heart, then all the outward changes in the world will not affect it; then the form may become feeble and bent, and the face as homely as a Caliban's, yet the love will still continue. Then riches may take wings and sickness come, and trouble invade the home, yet peace and affection will still prevail. Then the tongue of poison may wag and friends grow cold, yet husband and wife will be as firmly devoted to each other as when they stood at the bridal altar, and vowed to "love and cherish" forever.

There are yet other requisites to a Christian marriage, but we need not particularize so minutely. They are all comprehended in the

general injunction to submit the cause to the Lord in prayer. A devout and thoughtful consideration of the proposed union will suggest wherein it may be defective, and also point out the correction, if such be possible. Should any serious hindrance appear, we would counsel postponement until it has been removed. Much painful martyrdom has been produced by ignoring this reasonable advice. Instead of a paradise, matrimony has become a Gehenna to multitudes who have rushed into it regardless of disqualifying circumstances and manifest obstacles in their way. Under proper conditions, however, the marital state is a state of happiness that ought prove attractive to the uninitiated. The divine sanction rests upon it in spite of the oft-quoted, but misinterpreted, language of the apostle Paul. He advised against it, it is true, but his advice was based on local conditions which have since then disappeared. His times were times of persecution, and on that account he thought it best for Christians to remain unincumbered by household cares, in order to devote themselves the more to the work of the Lord. It could not have been his intention to discour-

age wedlock forever, for that would have been contrary to the divine mind, as elsewhere expressed. There was need then of the undivided time and unfettered energy of all Christians; hence his famous utterance leaving matrimony to the option of the individual. On another occasion he said that "marriage is honorable to all," and thus showed that he did not mean what many cynical people have read into his lines. The normal state of man is doubtless the married state, and when entered into under God's direction it will be productive of the purest happiness.

"What is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love and peace combine
To stamp the marriage-bond divine?
The stream of pure and genuine love
Derives its current from above;
And earth a second Eden shows,
Where'er the healing water flows."

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.”

—PSALM LIII : 1.

III.

THE FOLLY OF ATHEISM.

THE number of outright atheists in the world is smaller than is commonly supposed. There are skeptics, rationalists and agnostics in abundance, but not many atheists. There are multitudes who doubt the miracles, question the divinity of Christ and discredit the Bible, but the number of those who deny the existence of God is limited. It seems these liberal people will do almost anything but that, possibly from fear of putting themselves into the category to which the psalmist assigns them here in the text. The conspicuous atheists of the day can be counted on the fingers of one hand. On the other side of the Atlantic they have Bradlaugh, the brazen-faced and swaggering blasphemer, who once stood up in the British Parliament, took out his watch and said, "I'll give the Almighty, if

there be an Almighty, three minutes in which to strike me dead," and then impudently waited the three minutes, thinking that by his little bravado he was demonstrating to the world that there is no God. We on this side of the Atlantic have Robert Ingersoll, who undoubtedly is the champion blasphemer of America—"by merit raised to that bad eminence." There has probably not been during the nineteenth century so reckless and malicious an enemy of the Christian faith. There is scarcely a "cunningly devised fable" of the last two thousand years which he has not dragged forth from its obscurity, and, after clothing it in his characteristic phraseology, served up to the American public as the scintillation of his own brilliant intellect. Yet even this mercenary blasphemer, this chief of infidels, will not positively deny the existence of God. The utmost that even he dares to say is, "I do not know that there is a God. I have never seen him. I incline to the opinion that there is not, yet I would not speak as an oracle on that point." He, doubtless, recognizes the absurdity of the atheist's position and is aware of the unfathomable dif-

ficulties into which a man plunges himself when he denies the existence of God, and so he contents himself with a vague agnosticism and undignified lampooning of the Christian religion.

We must either believe in a divine creator or admit that the universe is a mystery we cannot explain. To be an atheist involves one in contradictions and impossibilities without number, and is so plainly unreasonable that no amount of sophistry and laughter can cover it up. The wisdom of the average infidel of the age is excellently summarized by Paul Bert, the brilliant Frenchman and minister of Public Instruction under Gambetta. In a little book prepared by him for use in the common schools of France there is, among other rich things, a chapter on "What we do not know." We quote literally from the English translation of the book.

Question: What is God?

Answer: I do not know.

Ques.: Who made the world?

Ans.: I do not know.

Ques.: When and how did man appear on the earth?

Ans.: I do not know.

Ques.: What transpires after death?

Ans.: I do not know.

Ques.: Are you not ashamed of your ignorance?

Ans.: I need not be ashamed not to know what nobody can know.

Nine-tenths of the infidels of to-day will admit that all their philosophy is summed up in that brief catechism, that "I don't know" is their wisest answer to the weightiest questions that ever well up from the human heart. Only a limited few will venture beyond this "science of ignorance" and positively deny a divine creator. The skeptical masses hesitate to cross the Rubicon of atheism, because they know that without belief in God the universe and its origin are an unsolved problem.

I. We here lay down the proposition, and shall endeavor to prove it, that the existence of the world implies the existence of a living God.

On a previous occasion we tried to show you that science does not testify against, but rather in favor of, this proposition. Only such naturalists as are prejudiced from the outstart

think they have found in science an arsenal of destructive weapons against the Christian's faith. Many others who are equally as eminent, but free from prejudice, have found everywhere footprints of a creator, and believe those naturalists who cannot see such traces to be blind and inexcusable. Some one has said that an undevout astronomer must be mad. The same remark would apply with equal fairness to the physiologist, the botanist, or any other scientific specialist. There is certainly some defect in the make-up of those students who "search creation's wonders o'er," and do not become devout. Their religious faculty must be greatly impaired, if they cannot see the name of God written in the heavens, and on every leaf and flower of the wide earth. It was a most becoming and also a very natural thing for a man like Agassiz, though not a professing Christian, to begin his scientific investigations by standing for a moment with uncovered head in silent adoration of the great Creator. The voice of nature declared to him, as it does to everyone who has ears to hear, "There is a God."

And just as little as the world can be ac-

counted for without divine intervention, so little can life, whether it be vegetable or animal. This is a truth to which we ask your thoughtful consideration for a moment. We will, for the time being, leave out of view the marvelous wisdom displayed in the external forms of the plant and animal, and consider nothing more than merely their life. That of itself demands a creator. Charles Darwin has tried to account for the existence of life independent of any divine power. He has endeavored to show that the universe has developed itself by its own inherent forces and tendencies out of a chaos of primordial atoms, that the world has reached its present state of perfection unguided by intelligence and uninfluenced by anything outside of itself. The result of his efforts is the famous Darwinian Theory so much discussed in the last twenty years. We shall not undertake at this time to prove to you that this theory is not as yet substantiated by facts. Indeed, we would not at any time presume to be able to argue this question with a scientific specialist, for he could easily play teetotum with the average clergyman in a scientific discussion. We are not a specialist, and have never de-

voted much time to the study of natural science, and consequently shall not imitate the sciolist

“Who tries with ease and unconcern

To teach what ne’er himself could learn.”

We have, however, examined some eminent authorities on the subject in question and are content to accept their opinion. We find that Cuvier, Agassiz, Quatrefages, Hugh Miller and Virchow are opposed to it. We shall point you to page and paragraph in their works where they reject the theory in explicit language.

Professor Virchow of Berlin, the greatest living naturalist, said, at the Anthropological Congress held in Munich a few years ago and composed of some of the best scholars of the age: “The descent of man from the animal is a theory supported by no sort of proof whatever. Neither has there been found the missing link between man and the ape, or between man and the animals. Never will we be able to determine whence man came, and however ingenious certain speculations may be, they are only speculations for the support of which not the least grounds are at hand. Under no circumstances can it be the business of science to swerve

from the straight path of calm research in order to bolster up a favorite theory."

Cuvier, the French Zoölogist and Physiologist, who can surely speak with authority on this and kindred subjects, says (Theory of the Earth, p. 123): "I have examined with the greatest care the engraved figures of quadrupeds and birds upon the obelisks; and all these figures have a perfect resemblance to their intended objects such as they still are in our days. Not the slightest difference is to be perceived between these animals and those of the same species which we now see, any more than between human mummies and skeletons of men in the present day." This means that in the last three thousand years, at least, there has been no appreciable development of the animal toward man.

Hugh Miller, the eminent geologist, makes the following emphatic assertion (Testimony of the Rocks, p. 77): "No great Palæontologist was ever yet an assenter of the Development Hypothesis." Miller's position on the fixity of species is indorsed by the English Geologists Brewster, Faraday and Sedgewick, as well as by the Americans Dawson, Hitchcock and Dana.

M. Quatrefages, another French scientist, no less talented than Cuvier, declares (*Natural History of Man*, p. 71): "Let us own it, then, frankly and without false shame, we yet know nothing of the way by which organic beings came to exist on the surface of the globe." Page 87: "In the name of scientific truth, I can affirm we have had for our ancestor neither a gorilla nor ourang-outang nor a chimpanzee; any more than a seal or a fish or any other animal whatever."

Then comes Agassiz, the noble American, and deals Darwinian Evolution a heavy blow by saying: "I see that many of the naturalists of our day are adopting facts which do not bear observation."

Last of all we quote from the very recent speech of Lord Salisbury, delivered at Oxford, England, in which he attacked Darwin's theory of the origin of species. After characterizing the theory as not a theory but an hypothesis, he says: "I prefer to shelter myself in this matter behind the judgment of Lord Kelvin: 'I feel profoundly convinced that the argument from design has been too much lost sight of in recent zoölogical spec-

ulations. Overpowering proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie around us, and if ever perplexities, whether metaphysical or scientific, turn us away from them for a time, they come back upon us with irresistible force, showing to us through nature the influence of a free will, and teaching us that all living things depend on one everlasting Creator and Ruler.' ”

Certainly any theory against which such eminent authorities as these protest, is far from being established, despite the floods of hypothetical ink and the torrents of eloquence that have been spent in its support. Darwinian Evolution is, therefore, not a doctrine of science according to the testimony of the scientists themselves. And until there is something like a consensus on that point we need not be apprehensive about its effect on Christian Theism.

But let us assume that Darwin's school is correct and that all organic life on this earth had its origin in some “primordial germ.” Then we ask, where did that primordial germ come from? It certainly has not always existed, for then evolution might long ago

have run its course. It cannot be supposed to have made itself. It must either have been created by the living God or its existence cannot be explained. Pushing the difficulty back millions of years does not avoid it. However far we may go back into the ages we find ourselves confronted with the alternative: "Either life was introduced here by the divine hand or it cannot be accounted for."

The friends of evolution have taken refuge in the theory of "spontaneous generation," by which they endeavor to show that even at the present time life can be produced out of inanimate substances. They cite us to the well-known fact that out of a piece of dead flesh there come forth, in due season, living creatures—maggots, worms, insects; and that in water that has stood stagnant for a certain length of time, there are found all manner of animals, small it is true, so small that they are visible only through the microscope, but animals nevertheless. And they say exultingly, "Does not that prove that life can come out of death without any apparent cause?" To which we reply with the utmost calmness and positiveness that it does not.

For the life that seems to arise from the flesh and in the water was either there already or it was introduced from the outside. If the flesh be placed where the atmosphere and the innumerable little life germs that are floating in the atmosphere cannot get at it, there will be no generation of life in it. And if the water be boiled so that the little infusoria that are now in it are destroyed, there will be no further production of life. In short, the theory of spontaneous generation has been completely exploded. Our revered preceptors taught us this in college days already, and the learned Darwin himself did not deny it. If, therefore, life cannot be produced out of death even by artificial means, how should it have sprung up spontaneously in earlier years?

But if they yield this point and simply say, "These germs of life were always here, they were not generated, but have always existed," then they find themselves face to face with other difficulties they cannot remove.

A commonly accepted theory of science is that the world was once an immense ball of fire, and has gradually cooled off and con-

densed into its present state. It has been calculated that the heat of this gaseous globe must have been about five thousand degrees according to Fahrenheit. Now, it is a simple matter of fact that at a temperature of one hundred and seventy-five degrees every trace of life is destroyed. How then could there have been any living germs at a temperature of five thousand degrees?

In order to avoid that difficulty, they say that these life germs were not on the earth at that time, but that the universe was floating full of them, and that after the earth cooled off some of them dropped down on it, and thus formed the origin of life here. This view also is untenable, because extreme cold as well as extreme heat will destroy life, and the universe is extremely cold. It is estimated to be about two hundred and fifty degrees below zero. No living thing could exist at such a temperature as that. Thus we are again confronted with the question, "Where did life come from?" If, as naturalists seem to know, this earth was once a ball of fire and cooled off, how can we account for the existence of life here? It could not have lived through all the fire, and it

could not have been in all the icy realms of space. This difficulty stares the atheist in the face, and he cannot look it, or laugh it, or reason it away. He is either forced to the conclusion that it was put there by the hand of creation, or he must admit that it cannot be accounted for. If he would only bow his proud head and acknowledge the truth of that sublime declaration, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," he would have a key to unlock this mystery and solve the problem. A great First Cause there must be. Is it not more dignified and rational to believe in a personal and intelligent cause than an impersonal one? Is it so difficult to give the God of the Bible the honor of being the Supreme Head of the universe? Is it not folly to run into the most absurd theories imaginable rather than to say, "I believe in God?" It requires five times as much faith to be an atheist and to swallow all these ridiculous theories as it does to be a Christian believer in "God the Father, the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth."

II. We lay down the further proposition

that the manifestation of *design in nature proves the existence of God*. It is useless to dwell upon this point, for it seems self-evident and the argument is so familiar. "A watch implies a watch maker; a world implies a world-maker." When we look upon a skillfully constructed machine, all the parts of which work together in perfect nicety, it never occurs to us to think of that as the work of chance or as having made itself. We attribute it to some inventive and intelligent person. Wherever there is art and design, we conclude there must be back of it a thinking mind. And should it be any different in nature from what it is in the limited sphere of human activity? Do not the works of nature the more imply a wise creator, inasmuch as they are greater and more wonderful than the works of art? Or is there any one who will dispute that there is design in nature? Surely his eyes must be blind and his reason blunted. The sun that shines, the clouds that water the earth, the seed that bears fruit, do they not all show evidence of design in the ceaseless discharge of their functions? Or consider man himself, whose anatomy is the crown of physical creation. How

nicely every part is adapted to its purpose, and how "fitly the whole body is joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Consider the eye, more accurate and complete than any artist's camera. Consider the ear, the delicate bridge between the outer world of sense and sound and the inner world of the soul. Consider the hand that writes and paints and draws sweetest music from harp or organ; or the foot, the elastic and mobile pedestal upon which the entire body is balanced. Is there no design in these, or in any of the other members of the human body? We do not wonder that Galen, a celebrated physician, said that he would challenge any one, after a study of a hundred years, to find the smallest bone or fiber of the human system that could be better located either for practical use or comeliness of appearance. The existence of an intelligent plan and purpose in nature is so patent that further proof is unnecessary.

We cannot put the argument better than it was once done by the great Napoleon. When returning to France from the expedition to Egypt, a group of French officers entered one

evening into a discussion concerning the existence of God. They were on the deck of the vessel that carried them over the Mediterranean. Thoroughly imbued with the infidel and atheistic spirit of the times, they were unanimous in their denial of this truth. They finally agreed to refer the subject to Napoleon, who was standing alone, wrapt in silent thought. On hearing the question, "Is there a God?" he raised his hand, and pointing to the starry firmament, simply responded, "Gentlemen, who made all this?"

What answer these officers made to Napoleon's query, or whether they made any, we are not informed; but had he been surrounded by a group of modern infidels they would, of course, have answered, and answered differently according to their various opinions. Some would have said, "The universe always existed;" others, "It evolved itself out of atomic chaos;" still others, "I don't know." So the great conqueror would have been regaled by as many different theories as there were infidels present, and would have heard enough philosophical nonsense in ten minutes to last him the rest of his natural life.

Whatever faults Napoleon may have had he was at least level-headed on the subject of creation and divine sovereignty, for while he recognized no earthly lord he was ready to join with the four and twenty elders who cast their crowns before the throne of Him that liveth forever, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

This is the only reasonable view, and the only one that does not involve us in absurdity. Any other simply multiplies and increases the mystery connected with the origin of the universe. To say, "There is no God," seems like a stubborn and silly evasion of the truth. To say, "I believe in God," solves a hundred enigmas and answers a hundred questions which must forever remain unanswered from any other source. "What am I? Why am I here? Whither do I go?" find no response from the atheist, the materialist, the pantheist. He is, indeed, foolish who expects any light on these perplexing questions from infidelity. The German poet Heine has graph-

ically expressed the helplessness and folly of the atheist :

“By the sea, by the dreary, darkening sea
Stands a youthful man,
His heart all sorrowing, his head all doubting,
And with gloomiest accent he questions the billows :

“ ‘Oh solve me life’s riddle I pray ye,
The torturing, ancient enigma,
O’er which full many a brain hath long puzzled—
Tell me, What signifies *Man* ?
Whence came he hither? Where goes he hence?
Who dwells there on high in the radiant planets?’

“The billows are murmuring their murmur unceasing;
Wild blows the wind—the dark clouds are fleeting;
The stars are still gleaming so calmly and cold,
And a *fool* awaits an answer.”

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”—2 COR. IX : 8.

IV.

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS WEALTH.

NO country of the present time can show so much of the providential in its history or boast of so wonderful a progress and so remarkable a prosperity as our own. The wealth and fertility of the United States have become proverbial. The Lamp of Aladdin could not conjure up such treasures as lie stored in our subterranean vaults and are only waiting to be brought forth. The golden grain that each summer waves upon our sunny fields exceeds by far the products of any other country on earth. Our elevators are mountain high, and still not high enough to meet the demands upon them. This year alone we have raised five hundred million bushels of wheat, an amount of which we can hardly form an adequate conception. A fabulous quantity of oats and corn and other cereals are annually gathered from our fertile

plains. With such wonderful fruitfulness and all our natural resources it is not strange that our country has come to be regarded the Eldorado of the age. Cousin John is rich, but brother Jonathan is outstripping him. The total wealth of the United States is estimated at sixty-five billion dollars, which would be an average of a little more than one thousand dollars to every citizen. Surely we are a chosen people called to dwell in the richest, fairest land on the round globe.

Yet it is true that, while we have great wealth as a nation and have comparative safety in its possession and enjoyment, there are certain inequalities connected with our social system and certain dangers arising out of those inequalities that we would do well to consider. While we sit here in a spirit of gratitude, possibly in a mood of complacency over our national and personal blessings, it might be not only proper but also profitable to give a moment's thought to the wrongs of our social system and some of the evils that are concomitant with our material prosperity. That eminent statistician, Mr. Thomas G. Shearman, in a recent article in the *Forum*, furnishes ample food for reflection. He

says there that it is possible to make a list of ten persons whose wealth averages a hundred million each, and another list of fifty persons whose wealth averages twenty-five million each, and another list of seventy persons whose wealth averages ten million each. He says, "No such lists can be made up in any other country. The richest dukes of England fall below the average wealth of a dozen American citizens; while the greatest bankers, merchants and railway magnates of England cannot compare in wealth with many Americans." He predicts that under the present conditions the wealth of this country will, in less than thirty years, be practically owned by about fifty thousand persons. We cannot vouch for the accuracy of these statements, but if they in the least approximate the truth they are deserving of the serious attention, not only of the sociologist but of every Christian citizen, for when the wealth of a nation becomes concentrated into the hands of a few men there is danger of social revolution.

It is not, however, from the standpoint of the political economist that we would discuss this subject this evening, but from the stand-

point of the Christian citizen. We know of a remedy for these evils which the student of social science ought not to despise. It can be said of wealth as it was said of the spear of Achilles: Reverse it, and it will heal the wounds which it has made. We believe that a considerate use of property will correct the wrongs and dangers arising from the accumulation of it. Let the political economist resort to legislation; to the Christian there is another way to the solution of these difficulties. It is not by declaring property to be robbery, not by rushing into the arms of a vulgar communism, not by casting insinuations at him who, through diligence and careful management, has accumulated a competency, not by fanning the flame of caste hatred, but by a proper use of the means with which God has blessed us.

The ownership of temporal possessions is quite scriptural, and, indeed, the subject of divine promise. St. Paul, in the passage we have placed at the head of this discourse, urges the Corinthians to give liberally of their substance in charity, with the assurance that they will receive for it an abundant return; that if they do what is pleasing to God, they will be the

gainers, even in a material sense. "He is able to make all grace abound toward you ; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Our theme, therefore, shall be: *The duties and obligations arising from the Christian citizen's possession of wealth.*

And the very *first* duty that we mention is *the support of Christian institutions, and the spread of Christian principles.* We believe that there is no way in which the prosperous citizen can better manifest his patriotism, or do more for the welfare of the country and the defense of society, than by the establishment and maintenance of Christian churches. In making this assertion we do not underestimate the importance of our public schools. They are efficient as allies to religion, and deserve the hearty support of every true-minded American; but they dare not be regarded as the main promoters of that spirit so indispensable to the preservation of our social and political institutions. They deal with the mind almost exclusively. The church deals with the heart as well as the mind, and furnishes, therefore, a more complete education and a better preparation for good citizenship.

It does not require a Solomonic wisdom to recognize that in the development of the citizen the heart must be taken into account, for it affects character more directly than does the head. A purely mental education is insufficient and unsatisfactory. The old saying that knowledge is power is indeed true, but the power may be for evil as well as for good. It can be used to the detriment of society as well as in its interest. Mere intelligence is not an elevating agency. The greatest possible knowledge of history, geography and other branches of learning will not of itself produce a good and honorable citizen. Culture in the head does not necessarily keep wickedness out of the heart. It is a simple matter of fact that some of the most scholarly men have been the most ungodly and depraved of creatures. Only think of Byron and Bacon and Doctor Dodd of England, the German poet Heine, Professor Webster and others. They all were highly educated and yet utterly corrupt. Their profound erudition did not prevent their complete degradation. It is possible for men to be learned and yet be knavish. Their information, without correct moral bias, may make them all the more potent for evil.

The human heart is a factor that must by all means be dealt with and that dare not be ignored even by the political economist. The heart is the man and its improvement is all-important. Correct ethical principles in our citizenship are a stronger defense to the state than all possible knowledge. And these principles cannot exist except as they are based on religion. That citizen is not reliable who is not filled with a sense of responsibility to God. Plutarch spoke the truth when he said, "There never has been a state of atheists. Sooner may a city stand without foundations than a state without belief in the gods." Not all infidels are anarchists, but it is an indisputable fact that all anarchists are infidels. These desperate revolutionists spit their wormwood on church and state alike. They are by no means numskulls, but are lacking all moral and religious culture. It is, therefore, the duty of the Christian to support that institution which alone can supply that indispensable element to loyal citizenship. There is no better purpose to which he can devote his means than the sustenance of the church which seeks to make men not only wise but also good.

The *second* duty we mention as arising

from this cause is that of *work*. The common view seems to be that the possession of wealth exempts from work, that the rich man by reason of his riches is justified in living a life of idleness. This opinion we believe to be erroneous, and contend that wealth involves a moral as well as a social obligation to work, especially in these times of discontent and agitation among the masses. A great deal of the prejudice of the poorer against the better classes arises from the fact that many of the latter spend their time in careless ease. The working man bitterly reproaches the landlord and the capitalist with doing nothing while he is doomed to a lifetime of toil and drudgery. The man of means ought to engage in work of some kind, either mental or manual. He is a member of the social organism, and as such owes it to his fellow members to be occupied in some useful form of activity. He ought to work, not because he has need of it, but because it is a divine ordinance based on right and justice. God has said through his inspired apostle, "If any do not work neither shall he eat." And from this law there is no exception. The healthy man who does not

work, whether he be rich or poor, an elegant gentleman or a seedy sluggard, is after all only a leech on the community.

No class of people has the privilege of idleness more than any other. Yet it is so common to call indolence a vice when it is indulged in by a poor man, but to look upon it as an attribute of respectability when indulged in by a rich man. There is a double code of morals which calls labor a virtue and at the same time makes it a disgrace and consigns it to the realm of social inferiority. The workingman is forced to feel that labor is dishonoring because the so-called better classes of society avoid it and withhold their lily-white hands from any kind of employment. The millionaire will pat the laborer on the shoulder yet will have nothing to do with him socially, simply because he is a laborer. This duplicity in the upper circles has the effect of making the wage-worker dissatisfied with his lot.

And since the prevalent feeling of discontent among the proletariat was in part produced by the rich man, it is he who can best allay it. He can most effectually teach the

laboring man that work is not a burden or a disgrace, but an honor and a blessing. He can do this by engaging in work himself, even though his temporal necessities do not demand it. By his own example in doing something, he can demonstrate that work, while it may at times make life sour, is also that which gives it its spice and its enjoyment.

Why is it that the spirit of discontent has not penetrated into the agricultural districts to any great extent? Why is the breach between capital and labor so narrow there as compared with the populous cities? It is because the farmer's hireling sees that the farmer, even though he be rich, works nevertheless, and does it willingly. In the field, on the threshing floor, at the hay ricks, they stand side by side, each earning a livelihood in the sweat of his brow. The rural employer does not taboo his men socially, or make them feel inferior by declining to soil his hands with them in the work of the farm. They drudge along together, and thus obliterate the odious line that has been drawn between capital and labor. And with the removal of this feeling

of distinction there vanishes the feeling of discontent.

This gratifying lesson in social economy furnished by the agricultural capitalist should serve as a valuable suggestion to all who have others in their service. The wise employer is he who does not disdain to come in contact with his men, and who himself takes a hand in some useful form of work. Such a course will secure for him their respect and confidence, and will have a beneficial effect in every way. It was a very humble, and yet a very noble, thing that Phillip Carteret, the first governor of New Jersey, did, when he landed at Elizabethtown. Instead of coming ashore with the royal pomp affected by some of the provincial governors, he walked from the landing place up into the capital, at that time a hamlet of only four cottages, with a hoe on his shoulder; thereby showing his intention to become one among them, and to work with them. A similar motive prompted the late King William, of Prussia, to have all of his male children learn some useful trade, and thus it came about that the lamented Frederic III. was a practi-

cal bookbinder, as well as a man of large heart and fine culture. There is not a laborer in the world but thinks the better of a prince or a man of means, because they do not despise the sweat of honest toil. For the rich man to be employed in some useful way has a tendency to tone down the asperity between the classes, and to demonstrate the correctness of the moral code which teaches that idleness is a vice, and labor a virtue. Work either of head or hand is, therefore, a Christian as well as a social obligation, resting with equal force upon the millionaire and the pauper.

The *third* duty we mention as arising from the possession of wealth is *simplicity of living*. One of the great sins of this age is extravagance. There seems to be a perfect mania for it. Men amass almost fabulous fortunes in a lifetime and then spend them in reckless profusion. Never has there been such a wild waste of substance as among our American nabobs. They tell us of the luxuriousness of Cleopatra's household, but that dwindles by the side of the palaces of our California millionaires. They talk of the magnificent banquets of Lucullus, but it remains to be proven that he

ever gave a ball costing a hundred thousand dollars, like that of a certain New York railroad king. In ancient Rome a private citizen once created a sensation by serving his guests with pastry made of nightingale tongues. Nowadays we are not astonished at a man paying fifty thousand dollars for a tea service or a hundred thousand for a race horse. Great extravagance was a rarity in earlier ages, confined mainly to royalty, now it has become frequent. And the objectionable feature about it is that it does not observe privacy but loves display. The places where these grandees unfold their offensive wantonness are public. They disport themselves on the streets of great cities, in the theaters and concert rooms, on the race courses and at the summer resorts. They drive their four-in-hands where the dust falls on the workingman, and carry their diamonds where they will dazzle the eyes of the poor. They invite the journalist to partake of their princely hospitality that he, through the press, may obtrude it upon others who would not, and should not, have known it. All this has a tendency to produce dissatisfaction among the laboring classes and should be

avoided as far as possible by the Christian citizen.

We do not mean that people, who can afford it, should not live in good houses and surround themselves with comforts, but we do mean that they should not be wantonly and selfishly extravagant, and that they should endeavor to avoid the excessive prodigality that may prove a stumbling block to the poor. Luxurious living on the part of the well-to-do is calculated to irritate the humbler classes, while a reasonable simplicity is conciliating and soothing. May we not appropriately adduce here as an example the wonderful influence which General Grant had over his men. Where and how did this great leader win the hearts of his soldiers? Not in glittering parades and splendid triumphal processions, not with the boast of heraldry or the pomp of power, but by marching with his men over the burning plowshares of battle and sharing with the humblest soldier the hardships and dangers of the campaign. Characteristic of the illustrious General was a little incident that occurred at Culpeper, Virginia. The army was about to return to their winter quarters in Washington city. There were two trains stand-

ing on the track, one of them a special for the General. It was the better train and would reach the city several hours sooner than the other. Some of the soldiers while they were waiting stepped on the platform, but were ordered off by a lieutenant saying that that train was reserved for General Grant. But the General overhearing the order said, "Go in, boys; there's room enough for all. One seat's enough for me." Such condescension and simplicity won for him the affection and unalterable loyalty of his men. Knowing him to be a plain and unaffected citizen like themselves they endured the hardships and faced the perils of the campaign without a murmur. There is more force in such practical sympathy than is dreamed of by the man of means.

There are still other duties arising from the possession of wealth which we have not time to consider now. They may all be grouped together under the general head of *benevolence*. It is a pleasure to us and a credit to our Christian civilization to be able to say that there is no lack of this noble quality among our citizens. *Benevolence* there is in abundance, but not enough *beneficence*. Vast sums of

money are expended in charity which do more harm than good. The donors are well-meaning people, but bestow their gifts in a blind, unintelligent sort of a way which encourages rather than diminishes poverty. Andrew Carnegie is responsible for the statement that out of every one thousand dollars given in charity nine hundred and ninety-five are wrongfully bestowed and foster what they were intended to cure. It is reasonable to believe that the easier people can secure financial aid for the mere asking, the less likely they are to become self-supporting. What the great majority of the poverty-stricken need is not so much money as a personal *friend*. Sympathy, careful advice and aid in securing employment will go further toward relieving chronic poverty than the constant and indiscriminate bestowing of alms.

The best and the simplest form of practical benevolence we have yet heard of is that proposed by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes of London. His work is largely among the needy classes in the *East End* of that great city. The plan he is trying to operate is that of placing a poor family under the guardian care of a well-

to-do family, charging the latter with a friendly interest in, and a certain degree of responsibility for, its ward. This will necessitate an occasional visit and an oral conference about the needs of the latter and thus will bring about that personal contact without which charity can do but little good. He says, "Would it not be a blessed thing if we could persuade some of the comfortable and well-to-do classes of the West End to interest themselves personally and directly in some of the honest, sober and industrious classes in the East End who are poverty-stricken and in need of assistance? Would it not be desirable to ask Christian men and women, heads of houses, and their families, to act as patrons to a particular family instead of subscribing to some charitable fund which others distribute? Money could be given where money was needed, the girls could be assisted into service, and the boys into business. If Christian households are interested in particular families their sympathies will be more drawn forth; different classes will be brought more together; and the general well-being will be more promoted than by the vague distribution of gifts."

In pursuance of his plan, Rev. Hughes spends a portion of the week in cursory visitation among the destitute to learn where charity is needed. On the following Sabbath he will say to his congregation, many of whom are wealthy people: "I have here the addresses of a certain number of needy families with a full description of their size and condition, and I would like a certain number of other families each to become patrons of one of these, and agree to take a sympathetic and personal interest in them." He invariably succeeds in affecting the desired arrangement, and thus gives an intelligent and sensible direction to the benevolent feelings of his people. The usual desultory and spasmodic character of charity is thus avoided, and a steady, careful, and discriminating benevolence substituted in its place.

We know no better method of rendering effectual and lasting aid to the neglected classes of society. There are other schemes of systematic charity, yet this seems to us the simplest and the best. But whatever our view of any particular scheme may be, there is no evading the duty of "doing good unto all

men." In some form of charity every prosperous Christian citizen should be actively interested. This is not only a direct commandment, but a social obligation also. Our relation to the commonwealth demands of us a brotherly concern for our fellow citizens. We cannot continue to selfishly ignore their claims without imperiling the very existence of society. The prevalent discontent and unrest will not bear increasing. And the indifference of Christian men of means to the wants and woes of the destitute will have that effect. Deeds of kindness and charity, on the other hand, will tend to soothe the agitated spirits, and will serve as "coals of fire" on the heads of those who feel hostile to our social organization. They may not be the means of converting the radical and blood-thirsty anarchist, but they may be the means of hindering others from adopting similar views, and rushing upon the dangerous ground of atheistic socialism and general revolution.

We have here in this Western Republic the most enlightened and progressive people on the earth. In religion, in morals, in parliamentary reform, we are in the van of the nations. And

for that reason it is likely that here shall be settled the perplexing sociological and economical questions looming up before us. If these questions are to be settled correctly, the Christian religion must be influential in the settlement. There is, therefore, a great responsibility resting upon the shoulders of those who profess that religion. Carelessness and selfishness and narrow sectarianism are criminal in these days of class hatred and strained communal relations. We Christians, when we lay aside our petty jealousies and unite our forces, are simply irresistible. May we then, in the name of God and humanity, combine heartily to secure a proper solution of the problems that involve the welfare of the country, and ultimately also of the church.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

—EXODUS XX: 8.

V.

THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

THE strongest opposition to a proper observance of the Christian Sabbath in this country comes from the friends of so-called personal liberty. With very imperfect views of the great blessing of liberty they are making a desperate resistance to what they regard an encroachment upon their rights. The zeal manifested by them in this unholy struggle is worthy of a better cause and calls for the very best efforts of Christians to counteract it.

There is a wide difference of opinion as to what extent the individual must be lost in the community and as to how far he should obey the behests of society in general. To define just where state authority ends and personal liberty begins is one of the most critical, yet at the same time one of the most important, problems of the age. Society will never be

thoroughly settled until the lines are distinctly drawn and properly observed. In European lands, where the legitimate authority of the state is so often exceeded by arrogant monarchs, the question assumes a still more serious aspect than it does here. There despotism has been carried to such an extent that its opposite, communism, is being rapidly developed. The love of power over their fellowmen seems to have become a mania with some of the rulers of the old world. The spirit of Louis the XIV. is not yet extinct. There are monarchs still who, while they may not openly express his well-known *L'Etat cest moi* (I am the state), nevertheless feel that they are the embodiment of the state and that the only duty of their subjects is to serve them and make them comfortable. Under such government the demand for personal liberty may be just, but there is no reason why the demand created there should be reiterated here. Under a "government of the people, by the people and for the people" the cry of "personal liberty" is unwarranted. Yet we are compelled to hear it on every hand and as an excuse for a multitude of sins.

The demand for personal liberty in our

republic is a sophistry. "Personal liberty," as it is understood and advocated by some of our citizens, would become the grave of real liberty. There is much prating about personal liberty, but it is a desecration and a prostitution of the genuine thing. Everybody who is about to violate any of the proprieties of society or of the laws of the land, cries out "personal liberty" as a sort of a palliative of the act. "Personal liberty," thinks the boy when he plays truant or indulges in a bit of ruffianism. "Personal liberty," thinks the young man when he walks up to the bar for a glass of "the dark fluid of perdition," or lays his head within reach of the shears of Delilah. "Personal liberty," thought Mrs. Langtry when, with a husband living, she tolerated and even encouraged the attentions of a notorious *cicisbeo*. "Personal liberty," thought that brutal, drunken husband in New Jersey when he plucked out the eyes of his wife. "Personal liberty," what crimes have been committed in thy name, and what enemies of society invoke thy protection! What a fearful misuse is made of a sacred thing! The fight against

law and order, the fight against religion and morality, the fight against purity and society, the fight against all that is good and holy, is made in the name of "personal liberty." Such a claim as is advanced by some of our fellow citizens is extravagant. The state in which it is allowed will soon become a state of chaos. In the conflict of apparent personal interests every man's hand would be lifted against his neighbor. A howling wilderness would be preferable to the community where every citizen does as he pleases. The privileges of the individual must be limited by the rights of society in general. No conscientious person will insist on a benefit when it must be taken at the expense of a similar benefit to some one else. Much less will any right-minded person indulge in a pleasure at the cost of an idea or an institution sacred to others. One of Æsop's fables teaches a moral bearing on this point. Some boys, playing on the banks of a pond, spied a number of frogs, and began pelting them with stones. After many of the poor creatures had been killed, one, more courageous than the rest, lifted his head above the water and

said: "Stop your cruel sport, my lads; remember, what is *play* to you is *death* to us." The privileges claimed and the amusements engaged in by some members of society are death to the rights of others; and he must be a very coarse, vulgar person, who will persist in enjoying himself in such a way as to wound the feelings of others, and jeopardize time-honored institutions. Every true citizen will have respect to the welfare of his fellow citizens and the good of society in general. There is no restraint put upon any one, except so far as to secure the rights of others. This is not tyranny, but general liberty for all. Without regard for the welfare of the commonwealth genuine personal liberty would be inconceivable. With these prefatory remarks we are ready for the discussion of the subject proper.

I. The importance of the Sabbath from the standpoint of the citizen will receive our first attention. Leaving for the present the interests of the church out of view, we believe that the interests of the state demand the preservation of the Sabbath. But in advocating its protec-

tion by law there are two extremes to be avoided. We must steer between Scylla and Charybdis—the state church on the one hand, and the absolute separation of government from religion on the other.

The union of church and state is an unnatural one. Whether it be such a union as is dreamed of by the pope, or such a union as actually exists in England, Germany and Russia, it implies a certain measure of religious thralldom and is detrimental to the interests of both church and state. Political interference in matters of conscience is tyranny. Kings, parliaments and senates ought not to intrude on that sacred realm. Liberty of conscience is the natural right of every man born of woman and ought to be respected. Laws making church attendance compulsory would soon become odious. Congress arranging a table of scripture lessons and deciding the length of morning and evening prayer would be sneered at by both Christian and non-Christian. The senate assigning to ministers their charges and appointing church officers would be regarded as high-handed and arbitrary in the extreme. Such interference would be productive of jealousy and revolution.

The European monarchies may still be able to do something of this kind, but it is inconceivable here. American manhood and love of fair play would protest against it. According to our minds the eagle of government and the dove of the Holy Spirit are birds of a different feather. The state church belongs to earlier ages and is thoroughly impracticable in a republic.

On the other hand, we must remember that the state cannot be totally divorced from religion. There is no truth of political philosophy more fully confirmed than that social stability is impossible without some kind of religious life among the people. Where there is no faith in a supreme being, and no feeling of responsibility to such a being society is necessarily weak and government insecure. Atheism is a sandy foundation for the body politic. This lesson we can learn even from paganism. We believe it was Plutarch who said, "There never has been a state of atheists. Sooner may a city stand without foundations than a state without belief in the gods." Laplace, the French scientist, expresses the same truth in somewhat different language: "I have lived

long enough to know what at one time I did not believe—that no society can be upheld in happiness and honor without sentiments of religion.” If, upon such authority, religion is indispensable to any well-ordered community, we may also safely declare that the Sabbath is indispensable. The one truth practically includes the other, for the Sabbath is the foster-mother of religion, the strongest safeguard and defense of social integrity. Coming, as it does, in the midst of our secular occupation, putting a check on all sordid desires and activity, and pointing the mind inward and upward, it gives elevated tone to private and public life, and becomes a strong support to social purity and honor. There is no more faithful paladin of law and order and no better guide to true citizenship than this bright and holy seventh day, which has by heaven’s enactment been placed among the days of the week. Apart from any ecclesiastical connection, it is a boon to human nature in general and is indispensable to right living. The body and the mind, as well as the spirit, make it a necessity. The views of Bishop, an eminent writer on criminal law, are cer-

tainly correct when he says: "It is a mistake to suppose that Sabbath-keeping is a thing merely of religious observance, or especially a tenet of some particular sect. On the contrary, the setting apart by the whole community of one day out of seven, wherein the thoughts of men and the physical activities shall be turned into other than their accustomed channels, is a thing pertaining as much to the law of nature as is the intervening of the nights between the days." Blackstone, the most eminent of all modern authorities on law, says: "The keeping of one day in seven holy, as a time of relaxation and refreshment, as well as for public worship, is of admirable service to a state, considered merely as a civil institution. It humanizes the lower classes, and imprints on the minds of the people that sense of their duty to God so necessary to make them good citizens."

If there were no higher grounds it would be expedient for the state to preserve the Sabbath purely as a moral educator, as the promoter of healthy, robust, reliable citizenship, as a bond encircling and compacting the social organization. We lay much stress upon

intelligence and go so far as to put a tax on all the people to supply free education. The state feels that it cannot afford to have its children grow up ignorant, and so makes the most comprehensive provision for their instruction. But mere intelligence is not enough. Education in itself increases facilities for crime, and the simple possession of knowledge may make men all the more powerful for evil. According to the "father of our country" the main element of self-government is virtue. There is need of educating the public conscience in order to make men respect the rights of others and reverence law. Religion alone can train up reliable citizens of a free and popular government. But what would become of the religion of the people without this weekly day of rest and worship? The great Roman Catholic statesman Montalembert puts the argument thus: "Without a Sabbath no worship; without worship no religion." He might have added, "Without religion no permanent freedom." For if we permit the sanctity of the Sabbath to be destroyed, this government will, in less than ten years, be under the heels of the very worst element of our population.

The law of self-preservation would suggest the maintenance of the Sabbath. The state makes liberal provision for the education of the masses, and compels every citizen to bear his part of the burden. With equal propriety does it demand one day out of seven for the fostering of the religious instincts of the people. It would be suicidal to neglect so important an institution.

Now it is not the intention of the commonwealth to enforce religious duty by civil law, or to impose the religious views and observances of Christians upon all people. That would mean persecution. We know that the Sabbath is as old as the race, and was intended to be co-extensive with the race. And we believe that it would be an infinite blessing to all men, both privately and publicly, if they were to observe it. Yet we would not compel men by law to keep the Sabbath as we keep it. We would not ask for a statute making it obligatory upon men to read the Bible and go to church on Sunday; for there is no virtue either in reading the Bible or in going to church, unless it is voluntary. All that Christians ask is that the

day be so protected by law as to make it possible for them to observe it religiously. It is the right of every man to worship God; a right guaranteed him by the government. His fellow citizens dare not engage in any labor or amusement that will interfere with that right or detract from the sanctity of the day. If any choose to abstain from devotion, that is a matter between themselves and God; but they must not disturb the peace and quiet of others. To deprive the Christian of the right of worship is as real and flagrant a wrong as to deprive him of his earnings, or to prevent him from getting an education. To abridge that right in any way is to abridge his liberty. He can worship only as he is undisturbed by the din of labor and the noise of revelry. Advocates of "personal liberty" should note this and be willing to accord to others what they claim for themselves. Our laws do not recognize all days as worship days to be thus protected from disturbance; but they do thus recognize Sunday, and throw over all, who desire to worship on that day, their protection. This is done on the part of the gov-

ernment as a reasonable obligation to a large class of citizens, but more particularly because the interests of society demand it.

II. If the Sabbath is of importance to the state, much more is it to the church. With us here in America, Christianity cannot and does not look to the government for any direct support, but stands upon its own basis. It is "rooted and grounded" in the love of a free people, and depends on them for its maintenance. For this reason good, steady habits and pious customs are all the more needful. As the conscience of the people deteriorates, the pulse of the church will grow weaker. There is no better educator of the public conscience than the Sabbath rightly observed, and, consequently, the church would do well to agitate the Sabbath question for the sake of the reflex influence it will have upon herself. Her own distinctive interests demand the maintenance of that holy day. We are loath to think of what might be the result upon the church if that bulwark were removed. Perhaps it is not extravagant to say, with Dr. Macleod, that

without the Sabbath the church of Christ could not exist as a visible organization on the earth.

Since this is true, and since the state has given us laws protecting the quiet of the Sabbath, we, as Christians, should do what is in our power to bring about a religious observance of the day. It is the duty of the church to see that this time set apart and sheltered by statute is occupied in an edifying manner. The state cannot compel men to be devout and worshipful, but we can and should constrain them to be so by moral suasion. We can, by education and example, do much toward a pious keeping of those twenty-four hours which the law has inclosed as separate from the rest of the week. The religious tone of the day depends largely upon the conduct and zeal of those who profess religion. And it is a matter for regret that many nominal Christians themselves fail of realizing the true benefit of the Sabbath, by spending it in a stupid, listless way, or even openly violating its sanctity.

We have been pained all the summer through by hearing that some professing

Christians attend the Sunday ball games just beyond the corporation limits, and that others patronize excursions of various sorts and in various directions. And on a recent Sabbath the climax of the season was reached when a local church of a sister denomination ran an excursion to a neighboring town, for the purpose of engaging in some religious festivities, it is true, but an excursion nevertheless. Such inconsiderate conduct on the part of its friends does more toward weakening the Sabbath than all the noisy demonstrations of the advocates of personal liberty. Here, then, is need of Christian watchfulness and a wide scope for Christian activity. We would not advocate stringent measures on the part of ecclesiastical authorities, or the adoption of any set of rules regulating the demeanor of members under their jurisdiction. This would savor of religious tyranny and might have the opposite effect from what is intended. The time was—and is not far past—when among the churches of Switzerland the consistories thought it expedient to establish certain laws for the guidance of their people. I cite a single instance, the district of Regensburg. The church

boards there laid down the following rules to be strictly observed by all Reformed people under their charge :

I. All unnecessary and noisy labor is forbidden. Under this head the following acts are specified : (*a*) The driving and watering of cattle during service hours. (*b*) The gathering in of any kind of grain or fruit. (*c*) All washing or hanging up of wash. (*d*) Any work in spring-houses. (*e*) All loading or transporting of country produce.

II. For works of necessity special permits must be secured from the town council.

III. The running about of children during the morning hours is prohibited.

IV. The playing of ten pins, except during a short space of time in the afternoon, is prohibited.

V. A watch will make the round of the district during morning and afternoon services to note any violation of the Sunday laws.

VI. Guilty ones will be turned over to the local judge for punishment.

VII. These rules will be read annually from

all the pulpits in the district on the first Sunday in May.

Any such proceeding would be inadvisable here. We doubt whether it would be expedient for any consistory to attempt to designate allowable or unallowable labors and amusements. But this is not necessary. The question how to observe the Sabbath ought to be an easy one for the Christian. No iron-clad rules can be laid down suitable to all cases. The Christian, however, knows the meaning of the day. He understands its import and purpose. He has the example of the Savior, and has his own conscience. If he follows these he will not go amiss. In this, as well as in doctrine, the Spirit will guide him into all truth.

While this is the case, it might be profitable to indicate a few things that we can do toward the maintenance of this holy day.

I. Ministers can contribute much toward a wholesome sentiment on this subject, by referring to it in their pastoral visits. A word dropped in the homes of the people will not fail to have its influence. They can also drive a nail at the proper time in the Sunday School

and in the catechetical class. But more particularly can they help the cause in the Sunday sermon. An edifying service always has been, and always will be, the soul of the Sabbath.

II. (a) The people can do much toward strengthening the Sabbath spirit by themselves resting from their labors, and granting rest to others. It is useless to urge men to be religious and attend to the wants of the soul, if we, by our mode of living, make it necessary for them to work so that they have no time to think of the soul.

(b) The people can encourage the proper Sabbath by cultivating home life on that day, by making it a day of joy and sunshine, a day which may be called a delight instead of a burden.

This and many other things may be done to foster a right use of that sacred day. Let us frown upon anything that tends to weaken its influence, and loosen its grasp upon the masses. May God grant that we all come to a higher appreciation of this Sabbath heritage.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

—MATTHEW VII: 20.

VI.

A COMPARATIVE ESTIMATE OF CHRISTIANITY.

SOME of our hearers may be familiar with the writings of the German poet, Lessing. Among them is a drama entitled "Nathan the Wise." In this drama there is an interesting story entitled, "The Three Rings." The story is told by one of the characters, an old Israelite by the name of Nathan, and runs about as follows: Far back in dim antiquity there lived a man who possessed a ring of inestimable value. The stone was an opal that sparkled in a hundred different colors, and had the secret power of making him who wore it agreeable to God and man. It is not strange, therefore, that this patriarch of the Orient never took it from his finger and resolved to keep it within his own family forever. He bequeathed the ring to

his best beloved son, and required that he again should leave it to the son most dear to him, and so on through endless generations. By virtue of this legacy and without regard to birth, the most agreeable son should always be the head and prince of the household. Accordingly, this wonderful jewel passed downward through successive ages until at last it reached a father who had three sons. These three sons were equally obedient, and consequently equally pleasing to him. Yet on different occasions the father was especially fascinated with this one or that one. When he was with the first he had the weakness to promise him the ring; when he was with the second he promised it to him; and when he was with the third he promised it to him. Thus each of the three sons lived in anticipation of once possessing the precious treasure, and each was ignorant of the claims of his brothers. As long as the father lived this peculiar situation was all right, but, alas, the hour of death comes and the good old man is in embarrassment. It is impossible to give the same ring to three different sons, yet it would pain him to disappoint any of

them. What shall he do? He secretly sends to a goldsmith, requesting him to make two others after the same pattern. His instruction is to produce exact resemblance, without regard to cost or labor. In this the goldsmith succeeds most admirably. When the rings are returned, the father himself is not able to distinguish the original. There are three; one is genuine, the others are imitations, but even the father cannot recognize the true ring. With glad heart he calls his sons, one after the other, and gives to each his blessing and his ring. And each lives in the blissful delusion that he has the true and only ring, and that the other sons are barred out from the inheritance. The father dies. And now the trouble begins. Each of the sons comes forward with his ring, and claims to be the prince of the household. They investigate, and wrangle, and criminate. They appear before a judge, and each solemnly swears that he received his ring directly from his father. Each stoutly affirms that his father could not have been false to him, and that his brothers must be guilty of deception. The judge becomes confused and irri-

tated. In anger he cries out: "If ye do not soon bring that father to the bar, I will drive you from my presence. Think ye, that I am here to solve riddles? Or wait ye until the true ring opens its mouth to speak for itself? But hold! I hear the real jewel has the miraculous power of making its owner beloved, agreeable to God and men. Now, this will decide. The spurious ones certainly cannot have the same effect. Which one of you three do the other two love the most? Who is the most amiable and agreeable among you? Speak out. You are silent. You all love yourselves the best. You are all three deluded. None of the rings is genuine. The original ring was doubtless lost. As a substitute the father had these made to order. My advice to you is, accept the situation. Let each believe his ring to be genuine. It may be that the father purposely produced this state of affairs in order to prevent the tyranny of the one over the others. Certain it is that he loved all three, and loved all three equally, for he refused to show partiality. Now, go, and endeavor to confirm your claims; bring out the virtue of

your respective rings; and in a thousand years return again to this bar. A wiser judge will then preside, and render a decision."

Thus runs the parable. Now, listen to the interpretation: The father is the great "Father of us all." The three rings represent the three religions most prominent at that time, the Christian, the Jewish, and the Mohammedan. The fact that the judge was unable to distinguish the genuine ring represents the alleged equality of these different forms of religion, and places Judaism and Mohammedanism on a level with Christianity.

Now, this is Lessing's creed—a most ingenious and pleasing way of expressing a very objectionable opinion. In this parable the learned author strikes an insidious blow at Christianity by ranking the divine scriptures with the sacred writings of paganism, by lowering the Bible to a level with the Koran and the Talmud. This is the form which infidelity assumed a hundred years ago, placing Moses and Mohammed and Jesus Christ into one category, and recognizing no religion as superior to any other.

It is our purpose to inquire this evening

whether such a position can reasonably be held. We shall make a brief comparison of the different systems of religion, in order to discover their relative merits. But instead of Mohammedanism we shall substitute Confucianism. The change is justifiable, since it does not affect the principle involved, and may be of added interest because of recent developments. And in order to be scriptural we shall apply the divine adage: "By their fruits ye shall know them." We shall make the influence which these forms of religion have exerted upon their devotees the standard by which to judge them.

I. And first let us examine Confucianism, the religion now prevalent in China. Its founder, the man after whom it is named, lived five hundred years before the time of Christ. It is called a religion, but it scarcely deserves the name, as it is only a system of social and political life based upon a slight foundation of philosophy. It contains no trace of a personal God. Its deity is an impersonal power back of everything we see. The idea of creation, as understood by Chris-

tians, was utterly unknown to Confucius. "He looked upon the universe rather as a stupendous, self-sustaining mechanism. He thought that all things existed from eternity, and were subject to a flux and reflux, in obedience to initial laws impressed upon them, how and why, we know not, by some stern necessity. Crushing every spiritual tendency of human nature, repudiating all speculation, and well-nigh all philosophic investigation, Confucius strove to direct the attention of men to the duties of social and political life." His religion has been the religion of China for very near twenty-five centuries. If it has any "practical" merit, it ought to have manifested itself in that length of time at least.

Now, what have been the fruits of this religion? What effect has it had on the Chinese nation? Anything but an elevating one. What character has it impressed on the almond eyed Mongolian? A moment's thought will show you that it is far beneath the character which Christianity has stamped upon the Caucasian.

The Chinaman seems totally incapable of *making any progress*. With one exception the

Chinese is the oldest nation on the earth, and yet it shows the least disposition toward improvement. It was old already when Babylon flourished and Athens was mistress of the Ægean sea. The mist of antiquity was on it before the Roman Eagle spread his wings in conquest. It had reached a fair degree of development long before the Christian era began. Yet the Chinaman of twenty centuries ago is the Chinaman of to-day. He is inveterate, conservative, almost immobile in his habits and customs. He has made no progress, and will make none as long as the present religion holds sway over him.

The Chinaman is notoriously *lacking in valor*. An essential element in national character is bravery. In this he is seriously deficient. Yea, we might justly apply to him an epithet more expressive than that. Recent history contains very damaging evidence against his martial courage. A few years ago a little handful of Europeans were pitted in conflict with the flower of the Chinese army. In a single battle near the city of Peking they succeeded in routing the whole military force of that nation. A corporal's guard of Frenchmen

defeated the concentrated power of an empire of four hundred and fifty million of people. During the late struggle with Japan the principal occupation of the Mongolian warriors seemed to be "showing the white feather," and they made it very conspicuous on a number of occasions. Verily, a nation that has no better military record than the Chinese cannot lay claim to a large measure of physical bravery.

The Chinaman is seriously deficient in many of the personal attributes which constitute *true manhood*. Cleanliness, which the Scriptures rank next to godliness, is not among his virtues. While he excels in purifying the garments of others he pays but little attention to his own. The average citizen does not change his attire until it is worn out, or so thoroughly filthy as to be intolerable. The Chinaman is given to the excessive use of opium, a habit exceedingly pernicious to the individual and degrading to general morality. The Chinaman practices polygamy, an institution detrimental to every interest of a people. The Chinaman holds woman under the foot of oppression, depriving her of education, of honor, and of freedom. The Chinaman is

devoid of proper parental affection and regards a crippled or deformed child as of no consequence whatever. If you had been in the city of Pekin this morning early you would have seen five wagons drawn through the streets, with men attending them, not for the purpose, as one might suppose, of gathering up refuse, but to pick up dead and dying babes which parents had cast out during the night, nearly all of them female but some of them imperfectly formed male children. The Chinaman knows nothing of charity. Asylums, infirmaries, hospitals and other benevolent institutions are foreign to him. The Chinaman is inordinately selfish, unbending in his prejudices, bigoted in his opinions, and literally iron-clad against the force of logic and superior intelligence. Is any further proof needed to demonstrate his inferiority to the Christian? And since the moral and social status of a people is largely the product of its religion, we justly reach the conclusion that Confucianism is inferior to Christianity.

II. The second ring of the parable, Judaism, needs no extensive consideration in this connection. Its representatives are living here in

our midst and every hearer can make his own comparison. We may, however, appropriately quote a few lines from a well-known volume entitled, "The American Jew." After showing how the Hebrews come to this country with scanty garments and without resources, and in a comparatively short time occupy prominent positions in the financial world, the author proceeds to say, "How have these people accomplished this? Is it by their surpassing intelligence? No. There is no race of men more intelligent than the Aryan. Is it by any useful invention on their part, or by devoting themselves to mechanical pursuits? No, certainly not. The most diligent inquiry fails to discover any considerable number of Jew farmers throughout the territory of the United States. And one will look long before he finds a Jew laborer among the workmen who build our railroads, work our mines, or develop the resources of the country. From the time when he first appeared upon the face of the earth, until this day, history does not record a single invention that can be claimed by the Jew. His soft hands and curved fingers grasp only the value that others have produced.

Jews have never founded a state of any magnitude, though they have always been more numerous than the Romans, who conquered the world, and now exceed in numbers any of the minor peoples in Europe. With a momentary exception in Moorish Spain, they have never dominated any people, or conciliated any people, or founded any great city. They have never produced a great soldier, and we cannot yet credit them with a statesman of the first class. Lord Beaconsfield was hardly more than a great party leader in politics, though he had a certain genius for apprehending the passing waves of emotion in the British people. Herr Lasker has never overthrown a government; M. Fould was only a clear-headed banker; and Sir H. Drummond Wolf has scarcely made a mark." We have no sympathy with the blind, brutal attacks made on these people in certain countries. Nor do we, as some anonymous writers have done, accuse them of every villainy possible to man. Yet, to our mind, there is no question that in inventive genius, industrial aptitude, commercial integrity, personal valor, and in every element of good citizenship, the Jewish character is far beneath that

of the Christian. It is almost a waste of energy to try to prove this to any unprejudiced and fair-minded person. And surely it is derogatory to their Christless religion, that after three thousand years it shows no better fruits than those we now behold.

III. We come now to the third ring of the parable, namely, Christianity. It is not necessary for us to rehearse to this audience the cardinal truths of the Christian religion, or to enter into a discussion of the sublime system of doctrines that clusters around the cross of Calvary. You are familiar with the distinguishing features of this great institution, which has been the source of so much comfort and illumination to the race. It stands before you. Its dogmas you know; its effects you see; its genial spirit you have felt. Our purpose is to show in brief words that Christianity has been and is to-day, the great teacher of the world; that the hand of God has been plainly visible in its history, and that the voice of God has been speaking through its oracles.

Let us go back for a moment to the very origin of this remarkable power and see in what

condition it found society and against what odds it regenerated and elevated it. At the time of its coming into the world Greece and Rome were the leading nations, and they seemed to take especial pride in the glory of their civilization. When, therefore, this young and modest religion sprang up in the obscure land of Judea, these proud and cultured nations looked down upon it with contempt. Even the Jews themselves lifted up their pious noses and said, "What good can come out of Nazareth?" But as the church began to grow and to exert its influence, the Roman government laid hold of it with the hand of power and tried to crush it out. For three hundred long years the emperors of that mighty nation persecuted the church of God. For three hundred long years Christians had to hide themselves in the caves and catacombs of the earth or suffer cruel martyrdom. Only occasionally did they come forth and then but to find that every man's hand was against them. But while God's church was being buffeted God himself was still supreme. And he resolved to crush these oppressive nations and eradicate their civilization. Accordingly, there rolls down from the north an irre-

sistible flood of Barbarians, a horde of wild and savage warriors numbering at least a million men. Under the leadership of the fiery and blonde-locked Alaric, "the scourge of God," they invade the plains of Italy, trampling everything beneath their merciless tread. They seem impelled by an unseen hand and no human power can check their progress. They approach the walls of Rome, where many a fearful cruelty had been practiced upon innocent and heroic Christians. Its citizens come forth and beg for mercy, with the utmost humility they beseech this mighty warrior to spare their city. But he says, "I cannot, I cannot, I hear within me a voice which says, 'Onward, Alaric, onward.'" And so Rome, the proud, the fair, the cruel, went down before this terrible horde and the glory of her civilization was hurled to the dust. Everything was wrecked by these rude invaders save one institution, and that was the Christian church. By divine protection it withstood the shock of this devastating scourge, and, upon the ruins of one that was past, built up a new and a better civilization. This period marked an epoch in the world's history, and from this time on the influence of Christianity became domi-

nant in the world. The barbarian invaders returned to their forest homes on the banks of the Rhine and the Danube, and the Christian began the work of social and moral reconstruction upon better lines than those of ancient paganism. And whatever of learning and art and literature the world enjoys to-day is due primarily to the healthful, reviving, stimulating influence of the church, the only undestroyed institution in the midst of that swift and radical revolution. The finest paintings ever made by the brush of man are the result of religious inspiration. The sublimest music breathed through human lips or drawn from man-made instruments was composed under the influence of religion and since the time of that invasion. The sweetest poetry ever uttered was sung by Christian bards and deals with Christian sentiment. The sacred and soothing institution of the home, as we are familiar with it, is one of the fruits of Christianity since it has become dominant in the world. Strange as it may seem, the comforts of our daily life also come to us through the teaching of Jesus Christ. Go anywhere outside the pales of Christendom and you will find the nations poor and

possessing only limited comforts and conveniences. Their houses will not compare with ours. Their towns and cities are without sanitation or illumination. Their trade and commerce are far inferior to our own. Our ships and factories, our schools and colleges, our libraries and art galleries are far and away the best of any on the earth. In government, in physical and intellectual freedom, in an exalted womanhood and in a pure and unselfish benevolence, the Christian nations lead all others. There is scarcely a feature, either social, moral or mental, in which they are not in the van. To what else can our beneficent and elevating civilization be attributed than to the lessons taught by that religion so savagely persecuted and yet so nobly triumphant?

And, further, this religion is not narrow and national as are very near all the other religions of earth. It is universal and all-comprehensive. It knows no nationality or race or color. Its founder gave this last commission to his disciples: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," no matter where they may be. The Christian

has not discharged his duty until he has carried the message of love to every human being, and he has not the spirit of his Master unless he is interested in the welfare of all men. The genius of Christianity is that of universal charity—"a charity which signifies love in its purest and highest form, not simply almsgiving or the rendering of material aid, but the doing of all that can be done to give happiness and elevation to mankind." This is the purpose of Christianity, and to its accomplishment it is devoting annually millions of money and hundreds of its brightest men and women. A religion with so broad a spirit and such high and holy aspirations is pre-eminently deserving of the admiration and encouragement of every lover of the race.

If Lessing, who wrote the story of the rings, could not see the difference between Christianity and Confucianism, or Christianity and Judaism, he must have been purblind, and we need not be disturbed by the opinion of a blind man in a comparison which is largely ocular.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities, and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.—TITUS III: 1.

VII.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

CITIZENSHIP has always been regarded a great privilege. There used to be a saying to the effect that to be a Roman was greater than a king. And, indeed, it was a great privilege to belong to the empire of the Cæsars in the days of its ancient glory. But if it was a great privilege to be a citizen then, much more so is it now in our land and under our government. To use a homely phrase, this is "God's country" in a very literal sense. This great Republic of the West stands here as a monument, not so much of what men can do as of what God can do. Almost every step leading up to its present greatness was not in accord with the designs of men, but in most cases directly contrary thereto. There is more of the Providential in our history than in the history of any other nation

of modern times. If I were a man of the world I would call it the *accidental*, but, being a Christian, I give it a truer designation, and call it the *Providential*.

The very discovery of this country was an accident, humanly speaking. Columbus, when he left the Spanish port of Palos with his little expedition, was not in search of the lost Atlantis, or any other unknown continent, but was seeking a westward passage around the world. In pursuit of that purpose he unexpectedly came upon the furthest outpost of this continent, the island of San Salvador. And had it not been for the casual evidences of approaching land that floated by them on the previous day, the daring navigator would doubtless have become a victim to his mutinous crew, and thus the discovery of this country have been projected indefinitely into the future. It was not man, but God, who brought the events of that critical time to so favorable a consummation.

The Declaration of Independence was also an accident, humanly speaking. The Pilgrim Fathers and their successors did not come here with the purpose of establishing an in-

dependent government, but simply to enjoy religious liberty, while remaining politically connected with the mother country. Through a series of events beyond their control and contrary to their wishes they were induced to strike off the hand of foreign authority, and found this Atlantean republic.

God's hand was also manifest in our preservation during the critical days of the civil war. We conquered the South not simply because of our somewhat greater resources, but especially because we were in the right, and, being in the right, could count on the favor of God. The relative situation was such that foreign military experts pronounced the conquest of the rebellion an impossibility. Louis Napoleon was so certain of the dissolution of the Union that he proceeded to establish the ill-starred empire of Maximilian, on our southern border. Even Gladstone declared that the republic could not be preserved intact, except by a miracle. Yet we came out of the conflict with a double triumph, for we not only put down the rebellion but also wiped out forever the stain of human slavery from the country's escutcheon.

Thus we see that the hand of God was distinctly visible in the establishment and preservation of our government. The Jews were God's chosen people in ancient times, but we of America seem to be God's chosen people in modern times, and for that reason I repeat that it is a greater privilege to be a citizen here than it has been in any country on earth.

Citizenship, however, is not only a privilege; it is also a sacred trust. It is ours not only to enjoy, but also to employ, and to perpetuate. In the short time at our disposal this afternoon, we shall concern ourselves more with its obligations than with its privileges, and shall enumerate some of the duties arising from the Christian citizen's relation to the commonwealth.

The first one is the duty of casting a ballot at every public election, both primary and general. There is a false notion that a Christian ought not to take any part in politics, or, in other words, ought to have little or nothing to do with the government of his country. I remember a good old elder, a most devout and estimable man, who used

to tell me that he never voted in all his lifetime, and that it was a sin to hold public office. These things, he said, were worldly and corrupting, and no true Christian should engage in them. A more erroneous and dangerous view than that it would be hard to entertain. Over against it I make the emphatic assertion that it is just as sacred a duty to cast a ballot and take an interest in legislation as it is to praise God and pray to Him in his house. Government, like the church, is of divine institution. "The powers that be are ordained of God," says the apostle. And that being the case, it is plainly the Christian's duty to manifest an interest in them. This is particularly true of our own government, which bears stamped upon it the lineaments of the Christian religion.

Contrary to the opinion of the freethinker, this is a Christian nation. Christianity is interwoven with the very history and structure of our government, and permeates all our civil institutions. In proof of this we call attention to a few facts among a multitude of others. The president annually proclaims a day of Thanksgiving to the Almighty for

his mercies. Upon many of our coins is engraved the pious sentiment, "In God we trust." The Senate and the House of Representatives, the army and the navy, as well as all our prisons and reformatory institutions are supplied with chaplains. Church property is exempt from taxation. Ordained ministers are authorized to solemnize marriages. All of our public officials are sworn into office in the use of the Bible, and by an appeal to the God of Christians. Nearly all the states prohibit secular noise and confusion on the Sabbath, and in most cases civil contracts made on that day are invalid. If these things do not signify a tacit recognition of the Christian religion, they signify nothing. But more conclusive still is the fact that our highest courts have repeatedly decided that Christianity is a part of the common law of the land.

It would, therefore, be criminal ingratitude on the part of the Christian citizen to be indifferent toward a government according him such distinguished prerogatives as does the American. Too long have many of our best citizens stood aloof from politics on the flimsy

plea of the danger of contamination. Simply to sing and pray will not clarify political life and political methods. To be righteous and amiable, without taking part in campaigns and elections, will not prevent civic deterioration and public corruption. To try to prevent the decay of nationalism and yet decline to take an interest in public matters is grossly inconsistent. The venal politician cares very little for our pious faces and our vigorous scolding, as long as we remain inactive. Unlike Satan, he does *not*

“Tremble when he sees

The weakest saint upon his knees.”

It is the clean, white ballot that he fears. For the Christian not to make use of it is almost treasonable. The very least he can do is to show his appreciation of this best of earthly governments by trying to elect to office men of purity and integrity. This form of activity will accomplish more for its perpetuity than pious mutterings or thunderous imprecations.

The second duty we mention is that of taking a decisive stand on all social and moral questions. This flabby, jellyfish, invertebrate

kind of religion, which tries to be all things to all men, will not aid greatly in solving the perplexing problems of the day, or contribute much toward the welfare of human society. And it is a humiliating fact that there is too much of that kind of religion. Trimming and dodging are among the fine arts of the day. Public opinion is a *monstrum horrendum* to a multitude of Christians. They dread to be singular from fear they may be talked about. They dislike to stand alone though they know they are in the right. With marvelous alacrity they hasten to get on the side of the majority. The advice which Pickwick gave to Mr. Tracy Tupman would be most agreeable to them. He said to Tupman, "When you go into a town howl with the mob, and if there are two mobs howl with the biggest."

There are far too many Christians like the tavern-keeper down in Tennessee during the civil war. The fellow was trying to be on both sides of the rebellion. When there were Northern men around he sided with the North; and when there were Southern men around he sided with the South. One day, however, he was completely *nonplussed*. A squad of Con-

federate cavalry who had stolen Union overcoats came riding up to the tavern. The leader, dismounting, demanded of the pliable landlord, "Are you a Reb or a Yank?" The landlord hesitated and scanned them from head to foot. He looked first at the blue overcoats and then at the gray pants, and not being able to determine whether they were Northern or Southern men, finally answered: "*Well, I'm nothin'; and I'm not much of that.*" The Christian ought to be *something*. He ought to have a decided complexion and a liberal amount of silica up and down his backbone. He ought to be brave enough to face adverse public sentiment, and more than all, to try to mould that sentiment favorable to the right.

I do not understand that "Christian citizenship" demands that the churches, as such, commit themselves to any political party, or allow any man, whether statesman or demagogue, to use them as a tool to subserve his own selfish purposes. Our function is to create sentiment, and if this be rightly done there will be no trouble about the ballot. We can arrange for public meetings for the

purpose of appealing to the public conscience. We can invite to our community such men as John G. Woolley and Edward Murphy, the silver-tongued apostles of temperance, to tone up the people on that burning question. We can ask ministers to preach on this and other crying evils of the day. We can petition city councils for municipal reform. We can, in public assembly and by private act, encourage and sustain those who, in a non-partisan way, are fighting the saloon, the concert hall, the gambling den, and the brothel. There are almost innumerable ways in which we can help to purify the moral atmosphere of this beautiful country, but it can never be done by the Pickwickian method.

Another duty of the Christian is to demonstrate by word and act the sanctity of the law. These are critical times in which we live. Lawlessness is increasing. The seeds of anarchy are finding favorable soil amongst a certain class of our people. The same spirit which moved the red-fisted Santo, when he struck down the president of the French republic, is lurking in our midst. Many of our citizens are dissatisfied with the present

order of things, and are dreaming of some golden Utopia, some "fool's paradise," which foreign demagogues have portrayed to them. They fancy that the only barrier between them and complete happiness is civil authority. And so their cry is, "Down with the law! Down with the government! Down with the police!" and we might add also, "*Down with the beer!*" These men want absolute equality, no one in authority, every one a law to himself. Such an economy would be impossible. Equality in the communistic sense of the word is out of the question. Nowhere, except among the lowest tribes of Africa or the far-off islands of the sea, where they have not civilization enough even to elect a chief, do you find such equality as that. There must be some one in authority. Take five men and put them into a boat, and set that boat adrift on the sea. There must be a captain among them. If there is not, they will soon be praying God to send one down. When two men ride a horse, the best should ride in front. And if one man rides in front, some one else must ride behind. There must be leaders,

and there must be laws, or else there will be pandemonium. If an official is objectionable, he can be removed at the next election. If a law works injustice, it can be changed at the ballot box. But while laws are on the statute books they should be respected. If they are not, government and society will be impossible.

It is time for Christian people to assert their patriotism and to oppose with vigor this spirit of lawlessness. Whatever cause there may be for anarchistic intrigues in monarchical countries, there is none here where the people themselves are the sovereigns. To go from city to city, after the manner of Herr Most, and preach the gospel of riot and bloodshed to angry men is a great crime. We are entirely too lenient in our treatment of it. If a man incites one person to arson or murder he is sent to the penitentiary for a term of years, but if some loud-mouthed, beer-soaked scoundrel incites a multitude to the same crime he is unmolested. The reason for such discrimination we cannot quite comprehend. But since the government tolerates this anarchistic propagandism, the only defense we have

is to inaugurate an energetic "campaign of instruction" against it. Ministers will do well to speak on the subject. No pulpit is too sacred and no day too holy for the discussion of so vital a question. To preach loyalty and submission to authority, is doing what Christ Himself did and cannot, therefore, be out of place in the sanctuary. It were profitable if the very walls of Zion would ring at times with unmistakable utterances on our communal relations. The theme is deserving of our most serious thought and our most burning eloquence. Both in and out of the pulpit we should try to educate and stimulate the "civic sense" of the community.

The fourth duty is a thoughtful consideration of the welfare of others. The American spirit, the *zeit-geist*, is that of avarice, an inordinate desire for gain. We are a materialistic, money-loving people. There is a great deal of truth in the remark, "When Germans meet they take beer, when Frenchmen meet they take wine, when Scotchmen meet they take whisky; but when Americans meet they take anything they can lay their hands on." There is here a burning thirst for

gold which stifles sympathy, ignores justice, and tramples mercy under foot. The most fearful cruelty is practiced in the name of competition. Much of our business is stained with the red finger marks of Cain, who said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" For example, take the "sweat shops" of our large cities. They are the disgrace of our civilization. To compel women to make trousers for six cents a pair, in order to keep their children from starving, is inhuman. The man who does it is deserving of the torments of hell. Yet ultimately we are to blame for it; we who go around from store to store and "Jew" the merchants down; we who buy where we can get things for a half a cent less; we who screw down the price though we know that every penny saved in this way is taken from the wages of those wretched women in the "sweat shops." It is, indeed, easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle—a real cambric needle—than for a man who gets rich by such means to enter the kingdom of heaven. There is more or less of this spirit of cruel egotism pervading our whole com-

mercial system, and it is decidedly unchristian. It keeps well within the form of law, yet in essence it is unpatriotic and disloyal. There is still no better rule in business life than that promulgated by the Galilean carpenter over 1800 years ago, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The last, but not the least, duty we owe to the commonwealth, is a strong and persistent defense of the Sabbath. Not a little of our national greatness may be attributed to this benign institution. The French statesman, Montalembert, was quite logical when he said, "Without the Sabbath, no worship; without worship, no religion." And we add with equal truthfulness, "Without religion, no political stability." The Sabbath, therefore, is an important factor in our national life, and has had much to do with making this country what it is, the cynosure of the world. To permit it to be desecrated is to allow one of the strongest supports to be removed from the structure of our government. We can render no more profitable service to the state, than to engage in a vigorous opposition to the encroachments made on this holy day.

It is not enough simply to talk of the hygienic phase of the question, and emphasize the need of a day of physical rest. We must insist on an enforcement of existing Sunday laws, in so far as they do not infringe on the rights of any American citizen. And, more than all, we must ourselves abstain from all unnecessary work, and from all pleasures and amusements that may make it necessary for others to work. We may have excellent laws respecting this holy day, and yet, if in one way or another, we ourselves desecrate its sanctity, these laws will soon become a dead letter. Our own personal example is the best defense of the Sabbath. And herein also lies its greatest danger. It is the doing of little things, or things that we consider little, that may gradually open the way for more serious offenses, harden the public conscience, and bring on universal desecration. It is our firm opinion that if this heaven-born institution is ever obliterated from our national life, it will be through the laxity of its nominal friends rather than the opposition of its avowed enemies. There is no more important duty of the American citizen to the commonwealth,

than a vigilant censorship over his own conduct as it pertains to the Sabbath.

- In a general way, the test of America's greatness is its obedience to the moral law. There is only one standard by which to judge of its future prospect, and that is its relation to God. If it knows God and keeps his commandments, it will be great. If it forgets God and tramples upon his commandments, it will sooner or later perish and become a byword with men. Tell me, therefore, what will be our country's relation to God fifty years hence, and I will tell what will be its condition. All history justifies the adoption of this criterion. France, in the pride of its wisdom, sowed the wind of atheism and reaped the whirlwind of an awful revolution. Spain and Mexico drifted into a lifeless Catholicism, and are suffering the penalty in the densest of ignorance and superstition. A like experience awaits this nation in case it departs from its traditional righteousness and forgets its God. "Sin is a reproach to any people," but "blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest:

“And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”—LEVITICUS XXIII: 9-11.

VIII.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

IT was once a quite general custom to thank God for his goodness before sitting down to meat. It has now become somewhat rare. Only in a few pious families does it still prevail. Many professing Christians offer no prayer at the table. They partake of the bounties of life very much as do the dumb cattle—unmindful of Him who is the giver of all good. For ten, twenty, and thirty years they regularly surround the family board, so richly spread by the beneficent hand of God, without the slightest sense of gratitude to him. Yet how beautiful and edifying it is to see a father uncover his head in the presence of his children and give thanks to the Almighty for his kind remembrance.

Beautiful as it is to express gratitude at the table, it is still more so for a whole

congregation to assemble in the sanctuary and "praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Is there a sublimer spectacle than that of a devout Christian audience lifting up their hearts and their voices in grateful recognition of Him who is the "giver of every good and perfect gift," offering prayer and song and devotion to their creator, preserver and bountiful benefactor?

The custom of public thanksgiving at a stated season of the year is of very ancient origin, dating back to the beginning of the Mosaic economy itself. Just before the Israelites entered the promised land God instituted for them a cycle of religious festivals. Among them was the feast of tabernacles, during which the people left their usual abodes and dwelt in tents made of the boughs of goodly trees and of palm branches, and rejoiced seven days before the Lord, bringing him sacrifices of burnt offerings, of rams and of bullocks. Another one of these festivals, and the one that we have chosen as the groundwork of our remarks, was that of harvests, when the people, as they reaped the crops, were required

to bring a sheaf of the first fruits to the priest, who was to wave the sheaf before the Lord as an acceptable offering, a thankful acknowledgment of God's blessing upon the fruits of the field.

This was a just and commendable custom, and ought never to be abandoned. His people away down in these distant ages, here in this great republic of the West, still celebrate a similar occasion with gladsome hearts; and they have equal if not greater reason to do so than had the Israelites. The soil of this, our country, is more fertile than was that of Palestine in its palmiest days. More cereals are raised to the acre here than were ever gathered from old Judea's hills. The golden grain that each summer waves upon our plains, from the Atlantic to the Pacific slope, is so abundant as to exceed the product of that land that flowed with milk and honey. The quantity of wheat stored in the great elevators of our western cities dwarfs into insignificance the well-filled garners of old Canaan. Our exports by rail and by water are greater far than what the smoking camels of Egypt ever carried from the promised land.

This year, also, the harvest has been plentiful. It is true, some, comparing it with former years, have been pleased to call it a failure. But this it has not been. Though the crops of this autumn have been somewhat less than the average, yet they have been very good. There is enough, and more than enough, to sustain comfortably the population of our country. After we have all been satisfied, there will still remain a surplus which can be sent to our less fortunate brothers beyond the seas. So rapid is the accumulation of grain in the great markets, that their reservoirs, mountain high, are filled, and it is almost impossible to secure sufficient means for transportation. Thousands of steam cars are in the service, and, groaning under their heavy burden, roll to the eastern seaboard. Yet even they do not meet the demands made upon them. The Lord of the harvest has been gracious to us this year also. And since he has thus generously dealt with us, it is right that we should make a return. But what can we give him that he has not first given us? What can we offer that is not his own? If we bring gold out of the bowels of the earth, we can

do so only because God placed it there. If we bring the treasures of the deep, it looks penurious, for he holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand. If we come with a meat-offering, we hear him say, "The fruit of the fields, the cattle on a thousand hills are mine." We can present him only of that which he has presented to us; and to do this is but our reasonable duty. He has permitted us to gather hundreds and thousands of sheaves from his soil, and asks us to return only a few of them. What some of these are, I will endeavor to indicate.

Under the Mosaic economy, God demanded material substance as a sacrifice. The people were required to consecrate the first and the best fruits of the land to his honor and glory. The sacrifices of the new covenant, however, are more spiritual, and its offerings of a higher order.

I. The first "sheaf" we are to bring unto the Lord is that of sincere *humility*. The human heart is inclined to be proud. Man is apt to appropriate to himself honor which belongs to God alone, and to regard himself as an im-

portant factor, if not the principal factor, in the universe. And he is, indeed, a wonderful being. His reason, intellectual faculties, and social instincts place him at the head of material creation. By means of his natural ingenuity and ceaseless application, he has accomplished great things. His achievements seem to border closely on the miraculous. What his ancestors regarded as chimerical and utterly impossible he has made a reality. The elements which once seemed wild and ungovernable have succumbed to his shrewd manipulations. Substances, apparently useless, have yielded to his plastic hand and become invaluable. The dense forest has fallen beneath his sturdy blows, and made room for the palace, the storehouse and the workshop. The sea which raved and foamed at the race, he has made the pathway of commerce. The thundercloud that lazily hovered over the mountain, he has caused to come down and enter his service. Its electricity carries his messages to the ends of the earth, almost as speedily as thought itself. That which appeared to be allied with darkness he has made the best means of illumination. Fire and

water, apparently opposite, he has brought together. They have clasped hands and become a tremendous power. Through their united agency wheels revolve, and spindles rattle, and rail trains move, and the steamship comes puffing and panting across the deep. He has completely revolutionized the condition of mundane affairs, and has accomplished so much that he stands amazed at his own handiwork. But in the glamour of success he fails to recognize the real author of it all. Seldom does he give God the glory for these triumphs, but ascribes them to his own genius and skill. He boasts of that which another has taught him to do, and given him the material and strength with which to do it. He loves to hear applause bestowed on himself, when, in truth, the credit lies with some one else.

“Of all the wonders which the eventful life
Of man presents; of all the raging fires
Of curious appetites and mad desires—
Not one so strange appears as this alone,
That man is proud of what is not his own.”

Great improvements have been made in agriculture. Go out into the country and visit

the husbandman, and you will see a great change in his plans and methods. New implements have been invented and new machinery devised, for plowing and sowing and reaping and threshing. What once was irksome and tedious has become comparatively easy to perform. Remarkable progress has been made in the art of soil culture. This is not to be regretted or discouraged, but rather does it give reason for rejoicing. Yet of what avail is it all without a propitious heaven, without the favoring elements? Could we reap the golden grain if all depended upon us—if, as some say, there be no God, and the voice of prayer but strike a brazen vault above? We may plow and harrow after the most improved directions, but we cannot protect the ground from destructive vermin, from flood or drought. We may sow the seed, but rain and sunshine are not ours to bestow. We may cut the wheat and shock it, but we are not certain that it will be garnered. We may stow God's blessings away in our granaries, but we cannot protect them from lightning, from conflagration and from the schemes of ill-disposed persons. Not until the

substance is brought to our very doors for consumption are we sure that it is ours.

Verily, this fact should induce us to be modest and to acknowledge that the harvest is, after all, not the result of our wisdom and labor, but of God's. There is a different law in the realm of nature from what there is in the realm of the spiritual. In the latter sphere "whatsoever a man sows that also shall he reap." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting" "Sure, ah, sure shall the harvest be." Good seed is certain to produce good fruit. In nature it is otherwise. Though we sow the very finest quality of grain the yield may be a failure. There is another factor essential to success here. We may plant and cultivate and water, but God must give the increase. If he were to withhold his blessing we would come to ruin in spite of all our skill and industry. If for a time his mighty hand should cease to bring favorable elements, hunger would come upon us and the angel of famine would cast the shadow of his sable wing over the nation.

The strongest, wisest and greatest would dwindle to skeletons. We would become pale and hollow-eyed as an army of ghosts. Enfeebled by starvation we would reel to and fro like drunken men and then sink into the dust. Instead of exultation there would be lamentation, and that most pitiful, most awful cry, "Bread! Bread!" Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud? Without God we could do nothing, but would die and return to the earth from which we were taken.

Solomon has pointedly said, "He that trusteth in himself is a fool." And truly, man does appear ridiculous when he exalts himself and ignores the guiding, sustaining power of God. It was the petty chief of an insignificant Indian tribe, who used to come out of his hut every morning, bid the sun welcome, and then point out to him with his finger the course he was to take for the day. This was unbounded arrogance on the part of the red man; but is it any greater than that of the white man who would run the world independent of God or dictate to him the course of his providence? It is a false conception which says there is no need of

looking heavenward, that man can prosper without the divine favor. "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life."

II. The second "sheaf" we should bring the Lord is that of *gratitude*. As our dependence upon God naturally produces humility, so does it also produce thankfulness. This is a duty all men should perform, but which very many neglect. And the cause of this negligence is the fact that men no more ascribe all the good to God but to themselves. The farmer cuts the grain with a feeling of self-complacency. He counts the sheaves and shocks and bushels with a smile of satisfaction. He stores them away with a glad heart, but seldom asks, "Whence do they come? To whom am I indebted for them?" To credit them to their proper source, and to give praise where praise belongs he finds a difficult requirement. To the Christian this is a pleasant duty, and it should be to every recipient of heaven's blessings.

At this appointed time we certainly have

reason to be grateful—the townsman as well as the farmer. God has blessed our fields and has done it generously. And this blessing is not for the benefit of the farmer alone, for the products of the soil contribute to the welfare of all. Our condition in the city is regulated by the harvests garnered in the country. Of what avail would be our wealth, of what service our money, if we could not procure in return for it the necessities of life? The harvest is God's gift to all his children without respect of person—the capitalist and the laborer, the millionaire and the cottager.

Nor is this our only cause for thanksgiving. There are a thousand others. When we have learned to count the sand upon the seashore, and to name the stars of the sky, we may attempt to mention all the benefits we have received. As individuals we have been showered with favors, though many do not realize it. Our being here this morning is in itself cause for gratitude. Since last we assembled by occasion of this national festival, at least five million of our fellow-men have gone into the other world, some of them prepared, and others,

alas, unprepared to face its realities. We are still beneath the skies, with time and opportunity at our disposal. Our homes, with the sweet influences that cluster around them, we owe to God. The beauties and glories of nature are all his handiwork. The rising and the setting sun, the soft verdure that cushions the earth, the clouds that curtain the sky, and all the bracing, healthful breezes that sweep over us are sent by him. Greater yet than these are the religious favors he has conferred upon us—the communion of saints, the house of prayer, the open Bible, the hope of heaven. With a copious hand does he shower spiritual blessings upon us unceasingly. We can count the hours of the day, and the days of the year; but God's mercies to us are innumerable. *Deo gratias* should be our cry to-day as we contemplate the divine goodness manifested to us personally throughout the year.

As a nation, God has continued to deal graciously with us, even as he has not with any other. This I say, remembering well the financial difficulties, the shadows of which are still lingering over us. We are but little more than a hundred years old, yet are already

equal in wealth and power to any of the older nations of the earth. Unless all signs deceive God is laying here the foundation for the mightiest people the world has ever known. There is to be here a wonderful composition of racial traits. The best of the English, the German, the French, the Scandinavian, and the Scotch character will be amalgamated to produce the type of a nation such as has never been known. Bearing this in mind, the financial reverses of the past year may be put down as a national blessing in that they seem to be sifting out some of the less desirable elements of our foreign immigration. The Atlantic liners are crowded with the lower, uneducated and unprincipled classes driven from our shores by the present commercial disturbances. In this way some of the infirmities of this composite race are being removed, and our national life will be the stronger and the better for it.

There have been strikes and boycotts, and serious agitation of the labor question, and some of our people have stood aghast at what seemed to be the ominous rumble of a threatening revolution. Yet even this social turmoil

has had its good effect in that it has aroused us to a sense of justice to the unemployed, and has served to demonstrate that the American people are patriotic, and, though eminently in favor of fair play, will tolerate no lawlessness, or incendiarism. The ultimate result of these painful clashings will be the finding of a better relation of man to man, of employer to employé. They are a part of our national discipline, and will help to strengthen our national life. The poet Goethe said that he never had a trial that he could not turn into a poem, and I am sure that if we are true to our traditional spirit, the clangor and discord we have heard during the past year will be changed into music in the near future.

Having the utmost confidence that our country is destined to play an important role in the history of nations, or, as Matthew Arnold has said, that "America holds the future of the world," we look even upon the dark and stern experiences of recent times as the servants of him who is fashioning the nation into that image he meant it should bear. The adversities and hardships we have passed through will form the materials for a truer and better

national life, and the trials we are now enduring will mean greater blessings for the future. Our abiding faith in the wisdom and goodness of God ought to make us grateful, even after the disappointments and troubles of the year.

III. The third "sheaf" we should return unto the Lord is that of *benevolence*. But how can we do this? We can give him nothing, for all is his own, and he is not in need of anything that we can present. He is not an object of charity, nor would anything that we can bestow be of service to him. He points us, however, to his children, our brethren, and says, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me." "Who-soever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of water only, he shall in no wise lose his reward." He commends unto us his needy people, "the poor whom we have with us always." We cannot here discuss the causes of poverty, but we know that the presence of the poor affords opportunity for benevolence. In this way they are a blessing to us. If it were not for them

our hearts would long ago have become hard as rocks. Without exercising benevolence the springs of benevolence would soon dry up. To remove all poverty would be to remove every opportunity to be kind, and thus to seal the fountain of our charity. But aside from this reason the Lord expects us to be benign to the needy. As a distinguished writer says, "The poor man is, as it were, an altar; if we bring our alms and lay them upon it, with such sacrifices God will be pleased." Indeed the material blessings we have received from heaven put us under moral obligation to minister unto those who are less favorably situated. "Charge them that are rich in the world that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." The true Christian, even though he be not rich in the accepted meaning of that word, regards whatever earthly possessions he has as simply entrusted to his care, and uses them in a generous and charitable manner. He tries to observe the apostle's injunction, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." The best be-

loved and most honored of God's children have ever been those who have lived unselfishly and have dispensed their gifts with a liberal hand. I think now of John Howard, the English philanthropist, who devoted himself and his substance to prison reform. There was scarcely a prison of any importance on the continent of Europe which did not receive his attention. Having spent a fortune in this form of charity, he died at last plague-smitten in a distant land. His final request was that he be buried in some secluded spot, that a sun-dial be placed over his grave and he be forgotten. But will he be forgotten? Not while the earth stands.

I think of George Peabody, the American merchant, and his magnificent philanthropy, the Peabody educational fund much of which was used for the promotion of "intellectual, moral or industrial education in the most destitute portions of the southern states."

I think of Peter Cooper, who established Cooper Institute; of Thomas Guy and his London Hospital; of Enoch Pratt and his magnificent Public Library at Baltimore. These and scores of others have pleased God and

enshrined themselves in the memories of men by giving their means for the welfare of others. Yet let us not suppose that only they who are rich are expected to be generous, all can and should be benevolent according to their means. There is no better way by which to express appreciation of the divine goodness than by ministering to the poor. This ought indeed be the largest "sheaf" which we bring to the Lord in return for his blessings to us.

“On earth peace.”—LUKE II : 14.

IX.

ON EARTH PEACE.

ONE thing that impresses the visitor to European countries is the military character of the people, and the enormous standing armies they maintain. It is almost impossible to look in any direction without seeing the gleam of the bayonet, or hearing the tramp of soldiers. About every fourth man is in a uniform of some kind. Germany maintains a standing army of 460,000 men, with a reserve of at least five times as many, and is capable of putting into the field on a day's notice 3,000,000 able-bodied soldiers. France claims to have even more than that. Italy has over 300,000, and Austria about the same. These soldiers are equipped with the most effective and deadly weapons that human ingenuity can invent. For three long years they reside in the barracks under the training of skilled

masters, and are drilled almost to perfection, in the cruel art of warfare.

We stood on two successive summer mornings on the parade ground at Kassel, watching the movements of two regiments of cavalry—1,250 men each. These men were mounted on splendid horses and equipped with an almost faultless outfit. So thoroughly were they trained that they went through their various evolutions with the precision of clockwork. The horses seemed to understand the signals as well as the men, and held their places in the ranks like human beings. And as the two regiments engaged in sham battle, and rushed down upon each other with the speed of the wind, the very ground trembled beneath their feet, and we shuddered at the thought of what terrible execution they could do if engaged in real combat. Yet this was only a little handful, comparatively speaking. Imagine the millions of men which the nations of Europe have been training as soldiers—the infantry, the cavalry, the artillery—rushing at each other with sword and lance, repeating rifle and belching cannon, and all the murderous instruments of modern

warfare. Imagine the deep-studied plans and stratagems of "gray and grizzled" generals, the sharp manouvering and deployment of the troops, the application of the highest wisdom of military science on either side — imagine this, and you shudder at what would be the result. Any previous struggle would be mere child's play compared with it. Even the leaders of the various armies themselves shrink back from the dreadful consequences of a war under present circumstances. Yet such is the situation over there that it may break out at any time. The most trifling thing may precipitate the conflict. Some diplomatic blunder, some real or apparent insult to a passionate ruler, may convert Europe into a field of carnage, and bring untold misery upon the people.

In view of this, how about that Christmas carol of the angels at the time of the nativity? Was it not prophetic? And if it was, how about the "Peace on earth?" Is the sweet and bloodless reign of Christ approaching, or were the celestial visitors merely warbling some poetic fancy? As a matter of fact, discord and strife are still with

us. The swords have not been turned into plowshares or the spears been beaten into pruning hooks. The gates of Janus are yet open at times, and grim-visaged war still frowns upon the nations. At this very hour two neighboring Oriental countries are grappling with each other in deadly combat, and streams of human blood are moistening the soil of distant Asia. The angel of peace does not yet wave his olive branch over us. This much is indisputable.

Yet, in spite of this, we contend for the prophecy of the angels, and maintain that there are unmistakable evidences pointing to its gradual fulfillment. The very perfection of the science of warfare in these days is a merciful improvement over the ancient, crude, barbaric, hand-to-hand combat. A conflict now must be short, sharp, and decisive. On account of the large number of men engaged, and the heavy burden of their support in the field, a protracted struggle would be almost impossible. One side or the other would have to succumb in a short time, and the distress and tension of the struggle would soon be over. The long range instruments of warfare

would also tend to hasten the decision of the battle, and in the end effect a comparatively smaller loss of men than a protracted combat at short range with sword and spear and bludgeon.

Besides it is no longer true that

"All things are fair
In love and war,"

especially not in the latter. There are laws governing the nations at contention with each other, and prohibiting the practice of the barbaric cruelties of the olden times. Noncombatants, whether men, women, or children, are protected in their person, and even in their property, except so far as the absolute necessities of war demand its confiscation. Battles may still be bloody and terrific, yet there is a humane spirit abroad which makes impossible anything like the savagery of bygone days. Prisoners of war are no longer slaughtered like sheep, or tortured by cruel and protracted mutilations. The wounded are not left to die unthought of and uncared for on the field where they have fallen, but receive prompt and affectionate attention by skillful surgeons and tender nurses. A well-organized hospital corps

follow in the wake of either army, and like angels of mercy visit the suffering heroes in their distress.

The settlement of international disputes by arbitration is also becoming more and more popular. The irenical spirit of the Christian religion is making itself felt in this direction. Many a destructive war has been avoided by submitting to an impartial and extemporized court the questions which could not be disposed of in the usual diplomatic way. The United States especially has spoken strong words for this method of adjusting international difficulties. Both presidents Grant and Garfield declared themselves ready to "participate in any measure that will tend to guarantee 'peace on earth.'" And Congress has, on one or two occasions, expressed itself in favor of substituting an arbitration tribunal instead of war, and has made overtures to other nations with this in view. In several instances our country has given practical demonstration of its sincerity in this matter by settling controversies with other countries by arbitration. We think of the dispute with Peru in 1863, and with Mexico in 1868; with

Great Britain about the Alabama incident during our civil war, when the mother country healed the wound which she had made by covering it with a \$15,000,000 bill; and more recently with Great Britain again over the Behring Sea differences. Our nation is distinctively a peaceful one, and its use of arbitration is having a wholesome influence upon the other nations of the globe. States and rulers now consider well before they resort to the dread arbitrament of arms. Fene- lon uttered true words, and words that must eventually receive universal indorsement, when he said, "as the people of each state ought to be subject to the laws of their country, although those laws may sometimes conflict with their particular interest, so each separate nation ought to respect the laws of the civilized world, which are those of nature and of nations, to the prejudice even of its own interest and aggrandizement. It is not lawful for one to save himself by the ruin of his family, nor to aggrandize his family to the injury of his country, nor to seek the glory of his country by violating the rights of humanity."

It is easy to see a decided improvement in the matter of international relations, and the outlook is favorable for a continuance. The golden age of the world is not back of us, but before us. In a few decades great changes will come, and he that lives then will see why the angels sang of peace and good will. The day is approaching when bloody Mars, the god of war, will be driven from the earth, and the demon of carnage will be seen no more. Our eyes behold the first streaks of the coming aurora, and our children will probably live in the full sunlight of the day which we so fondly, but perhaps vainly, anticipate. We have full confidence in the coming of Christ's kingdom, and in the mild and peaceful sway of his scepter. That marvelous event of eighteen hundred years ago was not a farce.

When the gates of heaven opened, and the angels brought down that little child on whose brow was written "Prince of Peace," there was quietly planted in the soil of this earth the little seed that is destined to grow into the great tree of peace, under the shadow of whose branches the nations shall find rest.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

“For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself or be cast away?”

“For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.”—LUKE IX: 23-26.

X.

THE TRUE TEACHER.

WE shall speak briefly this evening of Christ as a teacher. We have at other times spoken of his oratory, of the torrents of eloquence which rolled from his lips when he touched on some theme of high importance, or the soft and soothing words he uttered when he addressed the needy and unfortunate. We have spoken of his intellectual and literary powers by reason of which there dropped spontaneously from his lips the most beautiful gems of thought incased in the finest of language, language which even the most classical student could not improve upon after years of study. We have spoken of his personal magnetism and how, by his amiable nature and attractive personality, as well as by the witchery of his words, he held people spell-bound. We have spoken of his simplicity, how he came down

to the level of the common people and used language easily understood by them; how he employed the everyday things, with which they were familiar, to illustrate spiritual truths; how he spoke to farmers about soil culture, and to fishermen about fishes, and to women about affairs pertaining to the household. We have often referred also to the subject-matter of his sermons and how he startled his hearers with his new doctrines and strange paradoxes. We have seen how "the common people heard him gladly" and came from far and near to listen to his peerless preaching.

It is our purpose to speak at this time not so much of his matter or manner as of his *motive* and *theory of life*. This is a very important quality in a public teacher, and one, too, that has always been greatly overlooked. When we think of employing a teacher, the question always is: "What are his talents? What does he know? What control does he have over those who are placed under his tutelage? Our inquiry nearly always is concerning his technical attainments—concerning those qualities that pertain merely to the external. Seldom is the examination pushed beyond the

surface to learn what there is back of these outward accomplishments—to ascertain what are his incentives in the responsible calling to which he has devoted himself. Yet it is of the greatest moment to know what a teacher has in view, and what is the aim and scope of his teaching. Does he have reference to the mind only, with a little byplay of physical culture, or does he take into account the soul also? Does he believe that this world, with its material limitations, bounds the entire career of man? Does he think that this life, with its narrow walls of time and sense, comprises all that there is of the human career? Is he a materialist, or does he believe that there is a higher sphere, and consequently a higher scope for his labors? That these fundamental ideas are important can hardly be questioned; that they will have a decided effect upon the teacher and his teachings is evident. No materialist is qualified to give the sort of instruction that makes a true and lofty citizenship. No teacher who believes in the “philosophy of dust,” a philosophy which says that “man is made of dust, that he eats dust, that he walks around awhile in the dust, and

then sinks into the dust," can rise very high. No master whose range of view does not reach beyond the clouds, can give to his disciples the kind of doctrine suited to men who are immortal spirits.

The ideas of Christ, the great teacher, differed widely from those of the materialist. He believed that man has both soul and body and that the soul is immortal. He taught the very reasonable thing that the personal spirit in man, which dominates so strikingly over natural and physical forces, is more enduring than those forces, and that we stand in relation to a sphere higher and wider than the earthly. He said to the thief on the cross, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise;" and to his disciples he declared, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also." He looked upon this world as preparatory to another, as a place of character-building which determines the destiny of man in the hereafter. Accordingly, his teachings comprehended in their scope both the earthly and the celestial life, and he frequently warned against an undue exaltation of the earthly. His theory made little of tem-

poral treasures except as they might be used to enhance the interests of the spirit. He said significantly: "What does it profit a man, though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." He meant to tell his disciples that there are things more valuable than gold and silver, and houses and lands, and that they should be careful not to exchange the superior for the inferior. His special aim seemed to be to impress on men the relative importance of things temporal and spiritual, and to warn against carnal views and sordid purposes. His very presence here as a "teacher sent from God" implied a heaven high aim and scope for his teaching, and it was this element in his doctrine which made him what he was, the world's best and most influential prophet.

It is easy to discern from all this what a true teacher or preacher ought to be.

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I. He ought, first of all, to have a heart that stands in a right relation to earthly things—not their servant but their master. He dare not be a time server or a mammon worshipper. He must not feel that these baubles of the dust with which he comes in contact are the only treasures, that the things we see and handle are the only real things. If he is a lover of the carnal world it will be impossible for him to proclaim the truth in a fearless and straightforward manner. His thinking will be biased and his speech muzzled by the influence of money. He will not care to jeopardize his own temporal income by saying that which might be offensive to those who support him. His utterances will not have the true ring of the divinely sent and divinely sustained messenger.

It is undoubtedly true that the more thoroughly a man believes in the eternal world the more independent he can be of this world, and the more courageous he will be in antagonizing falsehood and wickedness. He need not then withhold anything from fear of what man may do. He can then utter what he knows to be the truth without modification or reser-

vation. This, we believe, was the mainspring of much of the heroic action in the history of the church. For this cause many of our spiritual ancestors were so brave and defiant of the evil. Believing as they did in a brighter world beyond the grave, they were willing to sacrifice their prospects here on earth. According to the Savior's advice they had no dread of those who could destroy the body only, but stood firmly for the truth at the risk of losing everything here below. Worldly emolument and social preferment were motives they totally ignored.

I think just now of Latimer, the Protestant bishop of England, and his brave conduct toward the unscrupulous Henry VIII. While in favor with the court he wrote a letter of remonstrance to Henry for prohibiting the use of the English Bible, and even presented him for a New Year's gift, instead of a purse, as was usual, a New Testament with the leaf turned down to this passage, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." On another occasion he preached a sermon which greatly displeased his majesty, and was ordered to preach again the next Sabbath and to make an apol-

ogy. After reading the text he thus began, "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the King's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest: therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease; but then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest and upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God, who is all present, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell." He then proceeded to preach the same sermon with more emphasis and energy than before.

I think of Luther and his brave words at the Diet of Worms. All the temporal princes and ecclesiastical dignitaries were against him. He was cautioned against going there, and particularly warned of the radical and vindictive Duke George. But his answer to these warnings was, "If it rains Duke Georges for nine days I will go." In the presence of an immense concourse of spectators, including many of the nobles of the realm, he was called upon to recant. In response, however, he boldly defended his doctrines, and made that memorable declaration,

“Unless I shall be refuted and convinced by testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, or by public, clear, and evident arguments, I cannot and will not retract anything, since I believe neither the pope nor the councils alone, both of them having evidently often erred and contradicted themselves, and since it is neither safe nor advisable to do anything against the conscience. Here I stand, I cannot otherwise. God help me. Amen.”

I think of Dr. Harris, minister of Hanwell, England, and how he rebuked sin while looking into the muzzle of a loaded carbine. As was the custom then, he frequently had military officers quartered at his house. A party of them indulged much in swearing. The doctor noticed this, and on the following Sabbath preached from these words, “Above all things, my brethren, swear not.” This so enraged the soldiers, who judged the sermon was intended for them, that they swore they would shoot him if he preached on the subject again. He was not to be intimidated, however, and on the following Sabbath preached from the same text, and inveighed in still stronger terms against the vice of

profanity. As he was preaching, a soldier leveled his carbine at him, but he went on to the conclusion without the slightest hesitation.

As I think of these men and hundreds of others, I feel greatly humiliated. Their intrepid conduct rebukes me. I lack their courage possibly because I lack their consecration. I wish I were like them. St. Paul says, "Crave earnestly the best things," and I could wish that the power of the invisible would so dominate me as to remove all carnal timidity and make me brave as the sainted champions of truth once were. When I remember Paul and his long and eventful campaign crowned with a cruel martyrdom; when I think of Huss and Wycliffe and Savonarola, who walked through the flames to testify to the truth; when I think of the many self-effacing missionaries who have gone to heathen lands, who have cut loose from home and friends and all the amenities of civilized life, I must bow the head in lowliest humility, and confess that I have not yet resisted unto blood. I hope some time to enter heaven by the grace of God, and when I get there it seems

to me that it will be embarrassing to meet some of these noble, self-sacrificing ministers of the gospel, who have served so valiantly and yielded so much of this world's prospects for the sake of the testimony of the truth.

II. A true teacher should be broad in his views and sympathies. This Christ was. He was a Jew by birth and education, but a cosmopolitan in spirit. The blood of Abraham coursed in his veins, yet he was an all world's citizen. There was not the slightest trace of bigotry or narrowness about him. Unfettered by the bitterness of sect, or the selfishness of tribe and race, he loved all men. The scope of his teaching included all of human kind. Although "beginning at Jerusalem," his disciples were to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." On account of their traditional sectarianism, however, they were slow to apprehend his catholic spirit, and his all-comprehensive aim. To rebuke their intense nationalism he told the parable of the Good Samaritan, a parable in which the hero is

not a Jewish priest or a Levite, but one of that race which they hated with all their hearts. To understand the full significance of that story, we must bear well in mind the extreme animosity between those two races and especially the profound contempt with which the Jews regarded the Samaritans. They had no dealings with them, and, except in cases of necessity, never trod the soil of their country. To take, therefore, one of this despised race, and set him above the priest and the Levite, to make him even a model for the imitation of the Jews, was to them an almost inconceivable thing, and a severe blow at their racial narrowness and religious bigotry. This was far more startling than it would be for an American to hold up the Chinese or Hungarians as examples to pattern after.

It would be difficult to find, among the Christians of to-day, as liberal a spirit as was manifested by their great Master. Like the apostles we are slow to rise above national and sectarian traditions. The idea of spiritual fraternity makes but slow headway against the purblind and partisan spirit which still

prevails to a considerable extent. We forget that the kingdom of God is not an external one, that it does not consist in outward observances, but in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and that we have no right, therefore, to set at nought a fellow Christian because, forsooth, he cannot pronounce our "shibboleth," and does not agree with us in every detail of doctrine or ceremony. To disturb the fraternal feeling which should characterize all the disciples of Christ by magnifying some minor matter of creed or ritual, is an unbefitting and unprofitable thing to do. It is not form or external relationship that shall be the test of genuine religion, but the state of the heart as manifested in an active and consecrated life. The Savior's significant words ought always to ring in our ears when he said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." That church is the best church which does the most. That denomination is most Christlike which loves the most. That religious body has the best promise

of success which, while it does not ignore its own peculiar tenets and spirit, is most sympathetic and coöperative with other similar bodies.

Personally, I am strongly wedded to the Reformed Church. Its doctrine and cultus suit me best. I have been a member of it from childhood and will probably always be. It would require an influence strong as a derick to lift me out of it. Nevertheless, I can recognize the good there is in other denominations, and am always ready to clasp hands in fraternal greeting or in united practical work with them. I am cosmopolitan in spirit though thoroughly Reformed in doctrine. I am a Methodist if that means being in earnest. I am a Lutheran if that means being reasonably conservative. I am a Presbyterian if that means an abounding faith in the sovereignty of God. I am a Catholic also, not a Roman Catholic, but a member of the church to which St. Peter belonged. I do not know that St. Peter ever was at Rome, but I do know that he was at Jerusalem, and that he united with the church there. And that is the church

to which I belong—the universal church, the great body of believers, who, though interpreting the Scriptures differently and working by different methods, still stand closely related to each other by virtue of a common connection with Jesus Christ.

It is to be regretted that we still have people, and that, too, in clerical garb, who are like that man of whom Rabelais not very elegantly said: "He lived in a barrel all his lifetime and looked out through the bung-hole." The Christian church is greatly handicapped by the limited views of some of its members. For the ministers of one denomination to refuse fellowship, either pulpit or social, with those of another, is a reproach to the cause of Christ, and a hindrance to its progress. Such lack of love between those who profess to be servants of the same Christ, makes a most unfavorable impression upon the men of the world. They see that it is inconsistent with the spirit of the Christian religion, and it consequently proves a stumbling block to them. And the saddest thing about it is that this bigotry has, in many cases, so flimsy a foundation. It is

very much like the poet Sheridan's feeling toward one of his cotemporaries:

"I do not like you, Doctor Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell,
But this I'm sure I know full well,
I do not like you, Doctor Fell."

It is a prejudice that exists without sufficient cause and that would vanish after the exercise of even a little social fellowship. To withhold such fellowship is to be deliberately narrow and in this respect unlike the great Master in Israel.

III. A true teacher is not desirous of popularity for its own sake. Not being limited to this world, he can be independent of the applause of this world. To be popular in the common sense of that word is not a desirable thing, for the Savior says, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you." We cannot be universal favorites if we speak out fearlessly, and, therefore, it is not well to aim at pleasing everybody. It were better to have opposition for the truth's sake, than to be praised by everybody for withholding the truth. We do not mean to say that it is not

a good thing for a minister to have a large and sympathetic hearing. A numerous audience is quite desirable, so long as it does not tend to muzzle the speech of the minister in his effort to hold it. But it is certainly true that unless a minister is thoroughly spiritual he will be more or less sensitive to the praises of his hearers, and to that extent will be in danger of modifying his message to suit them. A large crowd may, therefore, be a restraint on the utterances of a preacher, and may, on that account, prove dangerous. Among the many who frequent the sanctuary on the Sabbath there will be the cultured, the wealthy, the influential, and it is but natural to want their good graces and their favorable judgment. Instead of speaking out, therefore, he may "trim" to suit them. He does not wish to offend, and thus deter these influential people from attending his services. A compliment from them sounds sweeter than music on his ear. He courts their praises even at the cost of some of his convictions. The desire for fame, which, as Milton says, is the last weakness of a noble mind, cuts the nerve of his preaching, and weakens his spiritual influence.

Christ differs from many of his ministers in this respect. He cared little for men's opinions, but spoke out fearlessly. In the prosecution of his work he went straight forward without regard to human influence. The sins of his time were dealt with conscientiously. The people of his time received their needed instruction at his hands. Though they complimented his preaching very highly, and said, "Never man spake like this man," he did not refrain from telling them the truth. He was not content to be a mere miracle worker, a juggler in words, an empty sensationalist. Simply to be surrounded by a curious and admiring crowd was not his ambition. He came to speak to the heart and to prepare men for his kingdom. In doing this it was necessary to utter brave words, and he never failed to do it. Though many of his disciples took offense "and walked no more with him," he continued sternly loyal to his mission, and abated not one jot or tittle of his message. His thundering denunciation of the Pharisees resulted in their bitter animosity toward him, and finally cost him his life. The sacrifice he made was, from an earthly

standpoint, a great one, as he might have continued the popular favorite had he so desired. He surrendered his temporal prospects in the interest of the eternal, and thus has set an example for his ministers throughout all time to imitate. Like him they ought to be fearless of men or devils, and ready to sacrifice this world for the other.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

“He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”—PSALM XXIII.

XI.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

IN the Orient of the olden times a shepherd was something different from a farmer of our times. He was devoted solely and exclusively to that occupation. His flocks were his only possessions and all his interest centered in them. With us agriculture and sheep raising are commonly combined. The farmer follows the two pursuits and does it merely for the profit there may be in it. His attention to the sheep is entirely mercenary, and apart from that has no meaning whatever. In the eastern lands this was different. Shepherdng was an occupation of itself. The shepherd cared nothing for agriculture, but gave his whole attention to the flocks. In consequence of this, a close personal relation sprang up between him and his sheep. He looked upon them as his com-

panions rather than his chattels. Alone in the desert, with no human being near, they were drawn close together. As the sainted Robertson forcibly says, "Between lives so distant there was woven by night and by day, by summer suns and winter frosts, a living network of sympathy. The greater and the less mingled their being together. They felt each other. They knew each other." Though there were hundreds in the flock each individual sheep had its name and knew it. We look upon a flock of sheep and cannot distinguish one from another. They seem as much alike to us as so many peas. The Oriental shepherd, however, knew each individual sheep and called it by its name. The tenderest kind of an attachment existed between them, and, as a consequence, he felt it his sacred duty to protect his animal companions at all hazards. If one went astray he sought it diligently. If some wild animal broke into the fold he defended the flock, even at the risk of his life. It was no easy occupation. Jacob, who engaged in it in the solitudes of Padan Aram, says it was a wearisome and responsible

position. "In the day the drought consumed me and the frosts by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes." David speaks of it also. He tells how, on one occasion when he was keeping his father's flock, a lion and a bear came upon them and carried away a lamb. He smote the bear with his staff, and, seizing the lion by the jaw, tore him asunder. There was danger as well as hardship connected with this pastoral pursuit. And keeping in view the love and the self-sacrifice which it involved, we get a better conception of the psalmist's meaning when he says, "The Lord is my shepherd."

Christ was a shepherd before he came into this world. His flock at that time was the heavenly host which he guided on their infinite journey through space. He called the stars into being by his almighty voice, and then directed them with his powerful arm across the blue plains of the firmament. A bright and shining flock they were, Orion, Arcturus and his sons, and all the multitude of glittering orbs that bestud the midnight sky. Through long ages he preserved them, and, faithful shepherd that he

is, kept them safely from destruction. Yet one human soul is worth more to him than all the shining stars of heaven. As Young in his "Night Thoughts," has beautifully said,

"Behold the midnight splendor, world on worlds!

Ten thousand add and twice ten thousand more.

Then weigh the whole. One single soul outweighs them all,
And calls this seeming vast magnificence of unintelligent
creation poor."

What you see above you, that azure canopy beset with golden gems, is naught compared with an immortal spirit that shall live long after they have ceased to shine. They are only dust, glittering it may be, yet doomed to vanish at the last into the night of oblivion, while the soul, the breath of God, shall last as long as God himself.

And so the great shepherd left the heavenly host and came down to seek the lost sheep of the House of Israel. With infinite condescension he turned from the material splendor of the skies, and came to gather together the scattered and helpless sons of men. He is here now as the "good shepherd." With unspeakable devotion he watches over and shelters his flock. The erring ones he

patiently follows into the wilderness of sin and brings them back again. The feeble ones he tenderly carries on his shoulders. The tempted ones he snatches from the jaws of the "roaring lion." And all of them he "leads upon the green meadows and by the cool water brooks of his Word." Who would not want to be under his faithful care and follow the guidance of his shepherd staff? Some one we are sure to follow. If it is not the Lord it will be another. It is impossible to be without some spiritual patron. If the Lord does not rule over us then some one else will. The enemy of souls is at large and misses no opportunity to lure the shepherdless into the dangerous and barren desert of sin. There is this alternative only, either Christ or Belial.

My work as a minister is to help bring people under the shepherd care of Jesus. I am thankful to be able to say, "The Lord is my shepherd." From personal experience I know that he is tender and faithful, and abundantly able to shelter his own. And because my relation to him has been a blessed and a pleasant one, I can the more earnestly encourage

others to enter into it. In doing this I may at times become urgent, even importunate. Some of you may think too much so. Yet, when you call to mind the great interests at stake, and the needless procrastination so common among men, you cannot wonder at my earnest solicitude and my vigorous speech. When you remember how many hear the overtures of the Gospel, and fully understand the bearing of them, yet defer a decision until some more convenient season, you must readily recognize the reason of my importunity. To use a practical illustration: Here is a merchant. A shopper comes to his store and asks to see his goods. In the most obliging manner possible the merchant takes down the goods from their shelf and displays them on the counter, carefully and plainly pointing out their excellent qualities, and their very moderate price. The shopper examines the goods and is pleased with them, but goes away saying, "I will think about it until to-morrow, and will then make my purchase." On the morrow he comes again, and asks a second time to see the goods. The merchant again displays them and tells of their merits. The

shopper looks them over and over, and then goes away a second time without closing a bargain. On the following morning he comes again, and repeats his request to see the goods, with the explanation that he has not fully made up his mind. The merchant again gives him an opportunity to inspect the goods. The shopper again examines them critically, and has no objection whatever to make either to the quality or the price. But again he departs without leaving his order. He comes again and again, until he has appeared six times in succession, every time inspecting the goods, yet never making a purchase. At last the merchant says, "See here, my good man, this dallying must cease. You must reach some conclusion. Either give me your order, or tell me you do not like the goods." Could you blame the merchant if he became somewhat in earnest? He must be a very patient man indeed, who, under the circumstances, would not cut the negotiations short.

Most of my unconverted hearers are acting in a manner similar to that of the undecided shopper. You have had the matter of religion presented and explained to you many a

time. You heard of it in childhood. It was brought to your attention in youth either by parent or teacher. It has been expounded to you again and again from this sacred desk. You find no fault with the overtures and blessings proffered, and you expect some time to accept of them. Can you wonder that I ask you to reach a conclusion and that I do it with importunity? Could you wonder if God were to become impatient with you in your irresolution and turn away from you forever? If he were not God, long-suffering and of tender mercy, he would long ago have done so. But he still stretches forth his hands exclaiming, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from their evil way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" His invitation and his willingness to receive will not fail, but your opportunity to come may cease. Like all the rest of mankind, your "breath is in your nostrils and you stand on the brink of the grave." You may not open your eyes on another morning's sun here below. Because of this solemn possibility I say, "To-day is the ac-

cepted time." *To-day* is always God's time, and if we are wise we will make it ours. I preach for to-day. I am not here to ask people to become Christians to-morrow or ten years hence. I may not be here to-morrow. You may not be here. The present is ours, the future we never see. For this reason I urge men to seek their salvation "while it is called to-day."

"Suns set and rise in these dull skies.
Suns rise and set, till men forget
The day is at the door when he shall rise no more.
O everlasting Sun, whose race is never run,
Be thou my Guide! "

The shepherd whom I commend to you is good and faithful. He himself has said it. Unlike the "shepherds of Israel," against whom Ezekiel prophesied, is Jesus. His sheep are not scattered by reason of his negligence, or torn to pieces because he cannot protect them. "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead

those that are with young." Jesus is full of compassion toward the weak, and his hand is strong to do what his heart conceives. No roaring lion or ravening wolf can ever tear a sheep from his fold: Once his arm trembled in Gethsemane, when the burden of human sin rested on his shoulders, and the demons of hell gathered against him. Once his hand quivered as it was nailed to the cross on Golgotha. But now no more. He is almighty, and abundantly able to defend and provide for his own. Whosoever can say with the psalmist, "The Lord is my shepherd," can also say

"I shall not want." How blessed is he that can use this comforting language! To have implicit confidence in him who is guiding us, makes it possible to do so. And to be able to say, "I shall not want," is really to be rich. But how few there are who know this blessed state! Everywhere there seems to be something wanting. Everywhere there is discontent and complaining. Turn where you will, and you hear the voice of fretful murmuring. The hearts of men are uneasy because of the lack of some temporal treasure. Dissatisfaction is an almost universal condition. Yet if one belong to the

fold of the Good Shepherd he can sincerely say, "I shall not want." His faith in Christ's ability to help and bless, will make him free from anxious care. Having him he has all, and thus is satisfied. The baubles of earth wane into insignificance compared with the richness of a Savior's love.

Not only does the Lord supply the present needs of his people, but he has also engaged to sustain them in the future. "I *shall* not want." The psalmist having uttered these words, afterwards confirms them when he says: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." In a very literal sense the Good Shepherd will care for his own. It may not always be our way, but in his own way he is sure to provide. He never grows old nor is his arm palsied so that he cannot help. He is able to avert every danger and meet every emergency, for "all power has been committed to him, in heaven and in earth." A certain member of the flock of Christ was reduced to apparent poverty in his old age. "You must be badly off," said a kind-hearted neighbor to him one

day, "you must be badly off; and I don't know how an old man like you can maintain yourself and your wife; yet you are always cheerful!" "Oh, no!" he replied, "we are not badly off, I have a rich father and he does not suffer me to want." "What! your father not dead yet? He must be very old indeed!" "Oh!" said he, "my father never dies and he always takes care of me." This aged Christian was a daily pensioner on the providence of his God. His struggles and his poverty were known to all; but his own declaration was, that he never wanted what was absolutely necessary. The days of his greatest needs were the days of his most timely deliverances. When old age weakened the hand of his industry the Lord extended to him the hand of charity. Often did he go forth from his scanty breakfast, not knowing from what earthly source his next meal was to be obtained. But yet with David he could rely on his Shepherd's care, and say, "I shall not want;" and as certainly as he trusted in God so surely, in some unexpected manner, was his necessity supplied.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pas-

tures. He leadeth me beside the still waters." Many of the Master's sheep have strayed away and are grazing upon strange meadows. With the appetite vitiated they prefer the weeds of sinful pleasure and the poisonous apples of Sodom to the green pastures and cool water brooks of the Gospel. They have broken away from the fold and give no heed to the Master's call. They can sing in the paraphrased language of the sweet hymn,

"I *am* a wandering sheep,
I *do* not love the fold,
I *do* not love my Father's voice,
I *will* not be controlled."

All of the Shepherd's gentle dealings do not avail. They continue their truancy and seem to court danger with deliberate purpose. Then he resorts to drastic measures. If they will not be drawn he begins to drive. He puts a bit into the mouth and leads them. We know of a lad who had been reared in a pious family. In infancy already he had been consecrated to the Lord in baptism, and afterwards grew up in the atmosphere of a Christian home. Parental prayers and affections were generously bestowed upon him, yet in

spite of all he became a wayward boy. His mother's gentle advice and tender yearning seemed to be in vain. He gave no heed to her directions and sported on the perilous brink of ruin. At last the Good Shepherd took the case in hand. One day, while she was on an errand, a message came to the mother, "You are wanted at home immediately. Your boy has broken a limb." In a fit of passion the lad had left the parental roof, and was stealing his way eastward on the cars when, by an almost inexplicable mishap, his foot was caught beneath the merciless wheels and severed from the body. The subsequent weeks of suffering mellowed his disposition wonderfully. The discipline of affliction made him meek and tractable. He is a different kind of a boy now. Fleece-torn and trembling, he has come to himself again. His willfulness has vanished, and he is easily led without a bit.

In one of our neighboring towns lives a man who, years ago, was very rich. Providence smiled upon him and he prospered greatly. But in the midst of his prosperity he became irreligious. Worldly success turned his head

and made him unmindful of God. The Shepherd of souls then laid hold of him with a forcible hand. Commercial reverses overtook him in rapid succession. His wealth took flight even more rapidly than it came. From the extreme of affluence he was brought down to pinching poverty. Humiliating as it was to his natural pride he became a traveling salesman. At first it was a great cross to him to take this descending step in the social scale. He felt ashamed to appear in the modest rôle of an agent. To conceal his vocation he carried his samples in a little bundle under his coat. But as he was walking the street one day they accidentally dropped to the ground and fluttered about in the wind. The children who saw him cried out, "Ah ha! he is carrying samples under his coat." This innocent rebuke so affected him that he decided he would have to become humble. And he did. From that time on he carried his samples in his hand. His pride left him and the piety of his earlier life came back again. He now holds a good position and is a man of influence in the community. It is no longer necessary to put a curb in his mouth and "*make* him lie

down in green pastures, or *lead* him beside the still waters."

"*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*" Multitudes do. The approach of death fills them with deepest disquietude. Their trembling souls start back from the somber shadows of the grave. The coffin and the shroud they cannot bear to think about. To call the earth mother and the worms sister and brother is to them the gloomiest and most hopeless outlook imaginable.

But this dread of dying is only a tribute to nature. The Christian in a state of grace can conquer the fear of death as his Master conquered death itself. In a hospital in the city of Berne, lay an actress on a sick bed. She was critically ill, and apparently near her end. Having lived a gay and thoughtless life, she was now afraid to die. The angel of death seemed to her indeed the "dark-robed angel." She trembled at the prospect before her. She wailed and lamented. The adjoining room was occupied by a pious teacher. This lady, though also in danger of death, was perfectly calm. The actress, however, could not control her

emotions, and loudly deplored her lot. Her moanings were uninterrupted and heart-rending. At last the teacher could endure it no longer. Though sick and weak, she arose, went to the door of the actress, and with a gentle voice cried unto her: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "In six troubles I will be with thee, and in the seventh I will not forsake thee." "When thou passest through the waters they shall not overflow thee, and through the rivers they shall not destroy thee." Under the influence of these soothing words the actress became tranquil and resigned. She adopted the sentiments so sweetly proclaimed to her, and looked into the future. In a few hours she passed into the valley in perfect composure.

Yonder a mother lies dying. She has ten children and calls them all to her bedside but one who resides in a distant city. With sad hearts the sons and daughters gather round the couch of their beloved mother. One by one she places her trembling hand

on their heads and blesses them. With the utmost tranquility she asks them to sing her favorite song. How can they sing at the deathbed of their mother? They weep. Then with weak and trembling voice the mother herself begins to sing and gradually the children join in the song. The sick chamber echoes with hallowed strains from the quivering lips of the entire family, and as the last notes die away the soul of the pious mother passes into the immortal.

Could you do that? Could you sing on your deathbed? Many a dying saint has. The soul that is full of the harmony of love will not lose its melody in the last hour. We, ourselves, have heard the songs of dying Christians and have seen their faces aglow with the light of an invisible glory. With an almost celestial sweetness they seemed to have joined in a chorus to us inaudible. And then lapped in the soft billows of angelic music their disembodied spirits went upwards and away. A more than human strength comes to the saint when he stretches out his bony hand to lean on the shepherd staff of his Master. He is of good cheer when he walks

“through the valley of the shadow of death,” because his Savior is with him, and the sweet fields of Eden just before him. In this comfort, and with this enrapturing prospect, unnumbered Christians have gone over into the heavenlies.

“Let Faith exalt her joyful voice,
And thus begin to sing,
O grave, where is thy triumph now,
And where, O Death, thy sting?”

“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

“At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.

“For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.”

—JOHN XVI: 23-27.

XII.

REASONABLENESS AND EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

PRAYER, like religion, has its basis in the deepest needs of the human heart. It is something that cannot be totally suppressed, however perverted religious ideas may be. It is made use of not only by Christians but also by Jews and Turks. Even the rude heathen engage in it in their own peculiar way. They supplicate the higher Being for help, whatever their conception of that Being may be. They commune with their gods, though those gods be only animals, or stones or a painted stick.

Prayer is one of the most natural exercises of the soul. If we observe man closely we find that there are moments when some mighty influence lays hold of him and impels him to make known his wants and present his desires to the Supreme Being. Yea,

there are times and circumstances when he cannot resist the impulse of his soul; when, even though he have no religious training, he becomes devotional and involuntarily bows the head and lifts up the heart in supplication.

Prayer is the channel through which we give expression to our religious emotions. It is that organ of our spiritual being by means of which we communicate with heaven, and it is just as necessary to the soul as sight or hearing is to the mind. To close up this channel of spiritual utterance is to put a muzzle upon our inner nature, and would be the cruelest kind of bondage to our piety and devotion. "Have you ever seen a dumb man under strong mental excitement? How he distorts his countenance, and twists his body, and moves his hands in fantastic gestures. How he opens his mouth and tries to move his tongue that is tied—tied never to be loosened again, in spite of his frantic efforts to move it. Down deep in his breast you can hear the hollow workings of those inner organs which give volume to speech, but all in vain. His whole frame seems to be in distress because he cannot pro-

duce an articulate sound. As you look at him you are touched with pity, and feel a deep regret that a fellow-creature should be deprived of the splendid faculty of expressing his thought." But even more lamentable than that would it be if a religious man had no means of communicating with his Maker; if the channel of prayer were closed, and the power of lifting the soul heavenward destroyed. It would be death to a Christian, and worse than death, to be filled with spiritual animation and have no way to give vent to it. As well amputate a limb from the body as to suppress the power of the spirit to communicate with the Father of spirits.

We know the skeptic says, "Prayer may be a good thing as a religious exercise, a sort of safety valve to allow the pent-up emotions to escape; its reflex influence upon the soul may be beneficent even though there be no efficacy in it. It can do no harm at least, if it does no good. But as for its bringing down upon us the blessing of heaven, that is a mere delusion. How can it be expected that God, if there be a God, can answer the prayers that come up from the millions

of the race. They may be contradictory. What is asked by one person may be deprecated by another; what is the desire of one may be the dread of another. Some may pray for rain, and some for sunshine. Some may ask for this or that, and some for just the reverse. How can the Almighty grant their petitions? And how can you frail mortal, you fleeting insect of an hour, presume to change the mind of that Being who, from all eternity, wisely arranged and ordained everything according to his infinite wisdom. How can you poor ignorant man venture to go before God with your supplication and tell him what to do? How can you expect to alter the divine decrees which were set fast before the world began? You may pray, but you are greatly deluded if you think that your prayer will receive any consideration from the eternal throne."

Sad would it be if we had no other consolation save what the skeptic has to offer. All these specious objections should not shake our faith in the power of prayer. According to the text we can go to God with our petitions and he will hear us. Although this

promise primarily concerned the apostles, there is no reason why it should not apply to us. It warrants the firm belief that if we ask anything in the name of Jesus the Lord will grant it. And what the Redeemer assures his followers here, he assures all men in other passages of his Word. It is as true as God Himself that he hears and answers prayer.

Now permit us, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to give you some of the reasons why we believe that prayer is efficacious, and also some of the conditions under which it is so.

I. The first reason why we believe that our supplication is answered, if it be sincere, is that Christ and the whole Bible teach it. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "What man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone; or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in

heaven give good things to them that ask Him." "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." The passage which forms the basis of this discourse represents a relation between God and man such as there is none more intimate. The Lord is called Father and we his children. This means that he is near to us, sees everything, arranges everything, and knows all our wants. Without his knowledge nothing occurs, and contrary to his will not a hair can fall from our heads. By the spirit of his son, we, as sons, may cry unto him, "Abba Father." Because of our intimate relation to this great Being we may speak to him as a child would speak to his parent.

Christ not only taught us to pray but he was himself an example of prayer. At various times he turned his face heavenward in earnest supplication. He prayed on the Mount of Transfiguration, he prayed at the grave of Lazarus, he prayed in the wilderness of Bethsaida, he prayed in the garden of his agony, he prayed on the cross in his dying

hour. At every crisis of his life and in every trying situation, he lifted up his eyes and his heart toward heaven. And he has taught us to do the same, with the positive assurance that it will be effectual in securing the favor of God.

II. Another reason why we believe that God hears our prayers is the fact that he is a God of love. A God who does not love us has practically ceased to be our God. It was his love which called us into existence. It was his love which endowed us with faculties but little less than angelic. It was his love which made the earth for our abode, and decked it with foliage and flowers in poetic profusion. It was his love which instituted here an economy in which even the storms of life are profitable, and serve to purify and prepare us for a better world. It was his love which sent Christ to the earth, and opened for us the gates of heaven and the prospect of eternal life. We have a thousand evidences of the tender affection of the Lord. Among all creatures we stand nearest to his great Father heart. And will this love coldly repel us when

we come to him in supplication? Will this love give a serpent when we ask for a fish, or a stone when we ask for bread? Will this love do less than human affection would do?

See that poor creature, alone in his chamber, sin-stained and sin-cursed, haunted by the memory of other days, and smitten by the whips of conscience; see him upon his knees wrestling in prayer, crying from the depths of his guilty soul for mercy, pleading most earnestly for the divine pardon. The human heart would forgive him—should not the great Father heart of God?

See another sadly afflicted mortal. His system is racked by disease, and quivers with pain. He is in deepest physical distress, and tosses restlessly upon his couch. With touching entreaty he throws himself into the arms of the Lord, and cries, "Father, if it be possible, deliver me from this sickness." Any human heart would have compassion upon such an one—ought not God?

See that honest and industrious father. He labors hard, yet cannot earn enough to support his family. All his efforts are insufficient to secure the necessary bread and raiment.

The little ones are poorly clad, and pale with hunger. In the secret of his closet the father brings his affairs before the Lord, and cries, "O God, be gracious and help me. Give bread for me and my family." And shall not he who hears the young ravens, when they cry, hear that prayer? Shall he who clothes the lily of the field in such exquisite beauty, turn a deaf ear to the prayers of his human creatures?

See that pious mother kneeling at the bedside of her dying child; see how she wrings her hands and calls to God, "Father, if it be possible, spare this child, leave me the lamb of my bosom." Never did she pray so fervently and importunately; never did she so throw her soul into a petition. Human beings would pity that mother, should not the God of love?

Men talk now-a-days as though we were living in a world of cold machinery, as though the Lord, having started the wheels of nature, had gone away and left them to run on until the end of time, as though he had no longer any interest in the welfare of his creatures. Every Christian heart must revolt at

such a view as that. To be left in a deserted world, at the mercy of a blind fate, would be comfortless indeed. It were better not to be so wise than to have so cold and cheerless a philosophy. There is no doctrine so comforting as that which tells us we are in our Father's house, that everything we see is his and at his disposal, that he is always looking at us and always thinking about us. How despairful the thought that we are in an empty residence, that when we cry for succor there can be no answer but the echo of our wailing. How consoling to speak that one word, "Father," how musical to our ears, how full of meaning! And shall not he who has taught us to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven," take pity on his children, heed their appeals and do all which that relation implies? Away with the notion that the prayers of men do not reach the loving heart of God. As well have no God as to have one that cannot hear or help.

III. The third reason why we believe that God hears and answers prayer is that it accords fully with his wisdom. It is true he

has from all eternity arranged everything. He has a plan, adopted long ages ago, which is now being worked out in the world. The Christian believes that more fully than does the skeptic. But when the skeptic says that the fact of such a divine plan excludes the possibility of effectual prayer, we differ with him. The answering of a prayer from human lips need not necessarily change God's plan. May not the Lord have embodied it into his plan from the beginning that he will hear the prayers of the righteous? May not this be one of the decrees? May it not be entirely in accord with his way of working? Says the sainted Cumming, "We know that if we do not sow we cannot gather the harvest. But it is reasonable to expect that if we dig and mellow the ground and put seeds into it the Creator will open those little seeds and bring forth an abundant harvest. The planting is the condition on which we reap, and surely that does not involve any change in the ordinances of God. If we do not eat we will not grow strong. But if we put food into our mouths, God will put forth his energy to change it into

blood and bones and muscles for the upbuilding of these bodies. The eating is the condition on which we develop, but that does not involve any change in the divine plan. We stretch a wire across the continent and adjust certain metals and fluids, according to an arrangement which he has ordained. We may then write a message and he will, in the twinkling of an eye, by an instantaneous thrill along that wire, cause the message to be faithfully written at the other end of it. Our adjusting the wire and the fluid is the condition on which the message will be carried, but our doing that does not imply any change in the divine arrangements. Now is it any more reasonable to believe that God will put forth his almighty power to help us on such conditions, than that he should put forth the same power to help us on the condition that we *ask* him?" If, however, a man does not believe in God, then certainly prayer must seem absurd to him. In that case it means no more than talking to the winds. But we Christians believe in God and in one, too, that is master in his own house, that has not tied

his hands by any law he may have made. We believe in one who can answer the cry of his people, not always in the way they intend, or at the time they expect, but according to the promptings of his wisdom and his love.

Then the Savior tells us, also, under what conditions our prayers will be answered.

I. The first condition is that we pray in the name of Jesus. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Now, what is it to pray in the name of Jesus? This is difficult for many to understand. When we say that one does anything in the name of another we mean that he acts and speaks as though the other stood in his stead. This is exemplified in the character of a foreign ambassador. We send a man to London. He is there as the representative of the American government. He receives his authority from the government. He acts in the name of the government, and whatever he says or does is attributed to the government. In the same way a minister stands

before his people in the name of Jesus. He is his ambassador. His words must be regarded as though the Lord himself uttered them. For the Savior says to his disciples, "Whoso receiveth you, receiveth me, and whoso receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." An ambassador would cut a sorry figure at the court of St. James, if he stood there representing no one but himself. He would be a virtual nullity without this nation of sixty million of people at his back. A minister would be a weakling if he came to his fellowmen with his own wisdom and his own message. The great Master, who has commissioned him and who stands behind him, gives him his dignity and power. It is only as he speaks in the name of Jesus that he receives an attentive hearing. If a man is thus feeble when he appears before his fellow beings without the authority of the Savior, how much more feeble would he be to appear in the presence of the Almighty upon his own merits. How could an erring, disobedient creature expect to command the consideration of him whom he has offended.

If God loves us, it is for Jesus' sake. If he hears us, it is as such who come in the name of Jesus.

II. Another condition is that we pray in the right spirit. If we have the spirit of God within us, it will prompt us to ask for nothing that may be detrimental to us, or contrary to the will of God. By bringing us into proper sympathy with the Lord, it causes us to request only such things as are compatible with his character to grant. One of the essentials of an effectual petition is that it be legitimate. If we ask for that which is unnecessary, for that which is intended to gratify our vanity, for that which may encourage any of our carnal impulses, for that which would be only a miraculous display of divine power, we at once destroy the possibility of the Lord's compliance. If we ask God to do that which we can do ourselves, we thereby invite refusal. If we pray for the poor, and do not give them of our substance, we cut the wings of our supplication. If we pray for the spread of the gospel among the heathen, yet never do anything to support the cause of missions, our

actions contradict our words, and cast suspicion on the sincerity of our desire. If we pray without faith, and with no expectation that God will hear us, we are making a foolish use of an ordinance that is holy and sacred. If we pray for grace and pardon, yet are not willing to have the arrowhead of a favorite sin taken out of our hearts, we willfully deprive ourselves of that for which we are praying. A self-condemned transgressor can never make forcible supplication to the heavenly throne, until he has put on the robe of righteousness which God provides through Christ. It is the "effectual, fervent prayer of the *righteous* man" that "availeth much," and not the listless and formal entreaty of the impenitent. Nine tenths of our petitions do not ascend to heaven, but fall flat at our feet by reason of some defect either in the prayer or in the suppliant.

III. A third condition necessary to successful prayer is submissiveness to the divine will. To assume that our desire ought always to be the guide for the divine conduct toward us would be an almost blasphemous arrogance. It would imply a wisdom on our part superior to

that of the Almighty. Not near as presumptuous would it be for a five year old child to dictate to its father, as for the wisest Christian to expect God's will to be always his own. The father may do many things for the child in response to its loving entreaty, which he would not do without that entreaty, yet he always exercises a thoughtful discretion in granting its requests, and frequently smiles at the folly of the same. He gratifies its desire only when that desire corresponds with his judgment of what is best for the little one. In making our supplication to the Father in heaven we must expect a similar divine reservation, and should imitate the Savior's "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." "They that seek the Lord shall not want any *good* thing," but it must be remembered that God will be the judge of what is *good* in each separate case, and that what seems *good* to us may not commend itself to his superior wisdom. For God to grant our prayers indiscriminately, would be the greatest calamity to us, for we often ask for the very things we ought not have. We are too ignorant to set up our judgment against that of the Almighty in this

matter. He always does what is best. He may refuse the thing we ask but gives us something better. The prophet Elijah once requested the Lord to take away his life. God answered his prayer by denying it, and showing him a way out of his discouraging situation. Plainly the prophet erred in his suicidal prayer under that juniper tree, and what God did for him was far better than the literal fulfillment of his request. We ought always to be confident that our prayer will be heard, even though it be not in the manner our ignorance had anticipated.

“In spite of many broken dreams,
This have I truly learned to say:
The prayers I thought unanswered once
Were answered in God’s own best way.”

“Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. . . .

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. . . .

“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. . . .

“And he cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

—MATTHEW XXVI: 31-41.

XIII.

CHRIST IN THE GARDEN.

JESUS partook of the passover on the night before his death. After that he instituted the holy communion of the Lord's Supper, which the church, through the ages, is to celebrate in remembrance of him. And immediately afterward sang a hymn of praise with his disciples. This hymn is contained in four psalms, the one hundred and fifteenth to the one hundred and eighteenth inclusive. It is the first and only time of which we read that Jesus sang with his disciples, but it is sufficient to sanction the use of song in the Church service. How beneficent and edifying is the power of music in the sanctuary, and how much there would be missing if it were omitted! It may not be a means of grace as the sacraments are, but it has been justly called the "divine art," is much akin to the

genius of Christianity, and ministers greatly to the spirit of devotion.

This the Christian church has always recognized, and from the earliest ages she has striven to move the affections of man towards God by the sweet strains of her sacred music. Next to the preached word is the influence of song. How often it has melted the stony heart and made it susceptible to the Gospel! In how many sad controversies it has banished the evil spirits, and brought peace out of discord and contention! On what innumerable occasions it has lifted the soul of the worshipper heavenward by its seraphic melody! At how many critical periods in the history of God's people it has charmed them and cheered them! Those were undoubtedly the best days of the church when the voice of song was heard the most. It was Luther's singing which made him and his followers invincible in the days of the Reformation. John Wesley was a giant, yet he never would have launched Methodism so successfully had it not been for the coöperation of his musical brother. The songs of Zion have had much to do with its triumphs. Their inspiring influence has often prevailed where

reason and eloquence were powerless. They are, therefore, an important element in a profitable service, and should receive due prominence in the house of God.

In connection with this first communion the Savior sang those four psalms. They refer to the Messiah, as you will learn by reading them. Had David, the author, known a thousand years before that the lips of Jesus would ever chant this song, his pen would have dropped from his fingers as he wrote. Throughout the Mosaic economy millions of Israelites tuned their tongue to those sacred words and hymned that sublime production in public and in private, but no one ever rendered it with the same force and feeling as did Christ. He sang in it his own experiences and emotions, his tortures and agonies, his conflicts and triumphs. He was its own hero and entered into its spirit as no other being could. And, methinks, that as his divine voice rolled out into the air on that eventful night, the very angels in heaven must have listened enraptured and have been moved to sympathy.

After the song, Jesus went forth with his disciples into the garden. And a dreadful jour-

ney it was. Under the shadow of the trees that holy man wandered with his eleven apostles. Thoughts of death were haunting his soul. The black flood of his anguish loomed up before his vision. The faithful disciples pressed closer around him as if they realized approaching danger. Perhaps a tear trickled down their cheeks. Quietly and solemnly they moved along. Not a word was spoken. Finally, Jesus opened his lips and broke the silence. And what did he say?

I. First of all he made the significant remark recorded here in the text, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." Pregnant words these! "So it is written," said Jesus. And as it was written so it came to pass. It seemed impossible to the disciples that they would become offended at, or forsake, their Master. The impetuous Peter made haste to assure him, "I will not be offended because of thee." In this he may have been sincere, speaking in ignorance of his own ability. But Christ knew what should occur and

said to him, "Before the cock crow thou shalt have denied me thrice." Still Peter answered, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." "Likewise also said all the disciples."

Still another important remark the Savior made: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." What feelings this must have caused in the bosoms of the disciples! At the very moment when their only help and hope was to be taken from them, the Master proclaimed that the most dreaded of enemies was approaching. "Satan desires you, challenges you, has asked permission of God to attack you. A bitter, personal contest with this invisible but obstinate foe is before you. Arm yourselves; watch and pray." And now the apostles are guilty of the strangest conduct in all their history. Despite the Savior's warning that the Prince of Darkness is on their trail, they are slovenly and indifferent. Despite his exhortation to be ready, they are heedless and unprepared. He goes a stone's throw into the gloomy shades of the garden to wrestle with the powers of evil, and when he returns finds them asleep—quietly

slumbering while all around are hosts of demons waiting for the fray, slumbering as though no danger threatened. He exhorts them again to watchfulness and prayer, and goes back to renew the struggle. A second time he returns, and a second time, to his humiliation and anguish, he finds them asleep.

What wonder that they were disgracefully defeated in the spiritual conflict, and when the Savior walked into the jaws of death cowardly forsook him and fled. If it were not sacred writ we could hardly believe the report of the Evangelist concerning this incident, it seems so strange and incredible. To lie down and slumber in the face of relentless and marshaled opposition is extremely perilous. Does the sailor, when the storm is howling, and the sea is raging, and the tattered sails sport in the hurricane like the flap of the death angel's wing—does the sailor then lie down to rest? Does the fireman, when the alarm bell strikes, and the threatening flames shoot upward, and men rush to and fro in wild excitement—does the fireman then deliberately take his ease? When the midnight robber has forced an entrance into the dwell-

ing, is plundering its treasures, desecrating its sanctity, and pointing the glittering steel at the throat of its inmates, does the father then calmly hold his couch and permit his house to be despoiled? Yet the disciples, thrice warned of danger, thrice summoned to effort, with their dearest friend in the dust and blood of conflict, with the fiery darts of their strongest foe uplifted against them, with the yawning abyss of hell before them—the disciples calmly lie down to rest. The consequences are but natural. A sleeping man is powerless; a sluggish warrior cannot fight; a drowsy opponent is half conquered. It is madness for a dozy soldier to expect to be successful. In spiritual as well as in physical warfare, untiring vigilance is the price of victory.

II. There is a further lesson to be learned from the Master's remarks on that eventful night. It is, that he bears the brunt of the battle, while his followers need only hold their post, that he does the difficult work, while they enjoy its fullest benefits. As we have seen, that little company entered into the his-

toric garden of Gethsemane; the garden into which David once entered when he fled barefooted and weary from his rebellious son Absalom; the garden around which cluster many hallowed associations, and which to this day is visited by reverent Christians from every part of the world. Our own Dr. Bausman, in his book entitled "Sinai and Zion," tells us that there are eight monster olive trees, at least two thousand years old, still standing there in hoary grandeur, and with silent tongue tell the traveler what occurred beneath their boughs nineteen hundred years ago; and are unquestioned witnesses that that is the very spot where Jesus prayed, and wrestled in agony until his bloody sweat moistened the ground. At the entrance to this garden he said to eight of his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." The only duty of those eight was to remain in sympathetic silence at the post where the Master commanded them.

He gave them no onerous work to do, but volunteered himself to be the hero and the sufferer. "Sit ye here, while I go and pray and wrestle and conquer." This was the

spirit of his whole career, for he became the voluntary substitute of his followers on every important and trying occasion. He took the most difficult part of every task, the most dangerous position in every conflict. He always stood between his faithful ones and threatening injury. Whenever any great purpose was to be accomplished he always said, "I go; remain ye."

Once when man, of his own free will, had transgressed the divine command and thus placed himself in an attitude of rebellion against God, there was council held in the chambers of heaven as to what disposition should be made of the sinner. The voice of mercy was for leniency; the voice of holiness and justice demanded satisfaction. The doom of man seemed sealed. Then came forth one of majestic presence, radiant eyes, and countenance glistening like the sun, one who from all eternity had been the happy and well-beloved son of God, whose heart had never felt a pang and whose lips had never touched the cup of misery, and said, "Sit ye here, while I descend to the earth. Remain ye silent, till I am clothed in human flesh." And

when he had come down to this sin-racked globe to meet the demands of justice, he said to men, "Sit ye here, while I go and die for you." His life was one of self-denial, his death one of self-sacrifice, his spirit that of relief and helpfulness. Such is his spirit to-day yet. He is ready to go, while we remain; he will work, while we sit down; he will toil and we enjoy the fruits; he will fight and we profit by the victory and sing the song of triumph. Wherever he sees his followers in trouble he cries unto them, "Sit down. Cast your burdens upon me and I will bear them."

III. Another point we glean from this passage is, that while Jesus was truly man he was also more than man. He took his three favorite disciples the farthest with him, in order that they might be eyewitnesses of the struggle, and afterwards record its supernatural features for the benefit of coming generations. It seems that Christ felt the need of having true friends around him in the time of anguish, even as we do. How consoling it is, in the days of trouble, to

have near you those who are willing to pray with you and comfort you out of God's Word. Have you never been in great affliction? Has sorrow never come upon you with a crushing and overwhelming weight? Have you not at some time been so surrounded with difficulties that you became utterly discouraged and could see no way of escape from the gradually contracting circle that threatened you? If you have, then you know what it is to need a friend, one on whom you can rely, one who has confidence in you and who will stand by you though all others have turned away. Even the Savior felt this need, for he was truly human, "like unto us in all things, sin excepted." For this reason he gathered his three intimates around him and said unto them, "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death. Stay near me now. Watch and pray with me." A few moments later we look into the garden, and at the entrance see eight disciples sitting upon the ground; a little further on we see three lying fast asleep; a stone's throw further we see Christ. In what condition? Trembling, trembling like an aspen leaf. And why?

There are no enemies in sight. Does he tremble at the prospect of crucifixion? No, for he voluntarily submits to it. Yet look upon that fairest of men, the one altogether lovely. See how his body grows torpid, his members stiffen in pain and quiver in agony. What has come over him? Is it sickness? Does sudden indisposition prostrate him? No, it is not physical illness, but the suffering of the soul. He cries, "My soul!" O, that pain! A hundredfold keener than that of the body. Yet it is all voluntary.

This incident is an enigma to the world. They do not understand it. Thousands have used it to bring Christ down to the level of a mere man. The infidel says to the Christian: "Here you can see what your Savior is. He taught you not to fear death, yet he himself fears it. He taught you to submit to the will of God, yet he prays three times, 'Father, let this cup pass from me.' He does not carry out his own teachings. He is a coward. His disciples and thousands of others showed more courage than he. The martyrs quailed not. They marched to the scaffold and the flame with melody on their lips. Even delicate maid-

ens joyfully met the King of terrors. But your Savior trembles like a weakling."

Thus the infidel. And he talks in this way because he does not understand the meaning of that suffering. If Christ had been a mere man, if his object had been simply to give an exhibition of fearlessness in the face of death, and submission to the will of God, then he has been surpassed by many others. But to us, who regard him more than man, those prayers and that sweat of blood have a different meaning. We know that it is written, "God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin." This is the key to the mystery of Gethsemane. As long as we do not recognize Christ as our mediator, his conduct in the garden will be to us a riddle. There is no reasonable explanation of it. But we must remember that he appeared there vicariously; that he is the one of whom Isaiah said: "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." We must call to mind the out-stretched finger and the emphatic utterance of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." We must think of Paul's declaration that Jesus was "made a

curse for us." God's wrath against sinful men lay upon him; and that is what crushed him to the earth and made him tremble. That invisible cup in the hand of the Lord contained the dreadful cause of the Savior's agony. In that cup, the cup of sorrow and woe, was contained the awful debt of suffering and death, contracted by a sinful race, and which we could not have paid and survived. That even Christ should hesitate to drink it is but natural, and that he finally did drink it to the very dregs is amazing. To think of what it meant is sufficient explanation of the struggle in the garden, and convinces us that Christ was more than human.

"On his pale brow the drops are large and red
As victim's blood at votive altar shed—
His hands are clasped, his eyes are raised in prayer—
Alas, and is there strife he cannot bear,
Who calmed the tempest, and who raised the dead?
There is! there is! for now the powers of hell
Are struggling for the mastery—'tis the hour
When death exerts his last permitted power,
When the dead weight of sin, since Adam fell,
Is visited on him who deigned to dwell
A man with men, that he might bear the stroke
Of wrath divine, and break the captive's yoke—
But O, of that dead strife what words can tell?

Those, only those which broke with many a groan
From his full heart—"O Father, take away
The cup of vengeance I must drink to-day;
Yet, Father, not my will, but thine, be done!"
It could not pass away—for he alone
Was mighty to endure and strong to save;
Nor would Jehovah leave him in the grave,
Nor could corruption taint his Holy One."

“And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray. . . .

“And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. . . .

“And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.”—MATTHEW XIV : 22-32.

XIV.

THE DISCIPLES IN THE STORM.

IN his human nature, Christ was like unto us in all points, sin excepted. He was tempted, he could easily be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, he needed rest at times. Though in constant communion with his heavenly Father, he was still conscious of the need of special hours of prayer. Though he had so much work to do with others, yet he spent some time alone in devotion. We see here how he went into a mountain apart and tarried there the entire night in prayer. The fact that it was stormy and tempestuous did not curtail his devotions. It is probable that he remained in retirement until the fourth watch of the night. As God he was Lord of all and was prayed to by others, but as man he felt the need of private communion with God and frequently sought it. In this respect he differed

from many persons now-a-days, not only people of the world but even Christians. There are many professed followers of Christ who never take time to pray or hold communion with God. They are so engrossed in their daily work that they do not see how they can spend even an hour in quiet meditation. They are perfect slaves to their calling. They walk so steadily the treadmill of their daily occupation, that they become utterly mechanical and almost forget that they are human. They rush so madly after their own business, that they lose sight totally of their "Father's business." In their desperate struggle for "the meat that perisheth" they imperil the welfare of both body and soul. We have heard of the Englishman who spent years in constructing a machine and then said of it, "This machine will some day destroy me." He meant that he would become so absorbed in it as to make wreck of himself in every part of his being.

This has been the experience of multitudes. They have become so absorbed in their secular pursuits that all the better instincts of their nature have been quenched. To work is a divine commandment, but to work

incessantly is not. There are duties superior to those of our temporal occupation. Our spiritual interests are paramount to any other. We have in mind a woman, who, after listening to a sermon on this subject, recently came to the minister and said, "Hitherto I thought I was here to work, but now I feel that I am here to be saved." How true this is, not only in her case but in every other, also! Yet how comparatively few there are who recognize it! The common conception is that we are here to work. And the common excuse for the neglect of religious duty is, "no time." With this platitude, business men and others ward off the claims of the church on their attention. With this specious plea, they seek to satisfy you as well as their own consciences. But, alas, it so often occurs that those who have no time for God are compelled to take time. They become sick. The physician is called and pronounces their case serious. "They are worn-out and must have rest" is his diagnosis and prescription. They must be off to the south, or to the mountains, or to the seashore. There is no other alternative; they must either drop their busi-

ness or prepare to die. Then the man who had not one hour for God, and who would not give even five minutes of patient attention to the minister and his plea, must drop his business for an indefinite period and hasten away to regain his health. Or it may be that the Lord lays more violent hold of him than that and casts him immediately on a couch of sickness, where, lying helpless on his back, he must do what seemed impossible for him to do in the days of his health, namely, look up to heaven. It is always profitable to have time enough for the serious things of the spirit, for if we do not voluntarily we will be compelled to later on. We have no more important work than Christ had and our spiritual needs are even greater than his. We do well, therefore, to keep in mind the hours he gave to prayer and communion with God.

We need Christ with us always, as the disciples needed him that night on Gennesareth. They were caught in a terrific tempest and their ship threatened to go to the bottom. But the moment Christ stepped into the ship the wind ceased. Storms will come to us

also in our lives. Our little bark will be severely buffeted by the winds and the waves. The presence of Christ will then have a soothing effect and will save us from disaster. How much we need some one at the helm as we sail the sea of life. There will be gusts of trouble and inconvenience. We will become agitated. This is particularly probable with those who are hot-headed, as some of us are. It requires no great cause to stir up our anger. Something goes wrong in the family. Household affairs are at sixes and sevens. A few thoughtless words are exchanged and soon there is a brisk domestic breeze blowing. Something happens in the workshop; through some one's carelessness things go awry, and soon there is a wind agoing that rivals in its bluster the roar of the steam fanner. In the office some message of disappointment, some letter with unpleasant contents is received, and immediately we storm. Our angry passions find vent in hasty words and are inflamed by the current thus created. We sputter and scold, and make ourselves disagreeable to those who are about us. You say, "Oh, I cannot help that. It is my

nature to be so. I was born with an irascible temper, and I cannot refrain from an outburst of wrath when I am irritated." But that does not excuse you. You ought to be able to control yourself. It is much better to be cool and composed than to be angry and violent. In such a moment of ill temper you may do more mischief than your whole life can ever repair. You cannot always take back the injury that you do to those hearts that throb nearest to you. You may relent and repent, but that may not retract the scorpion bitterness of your angry words. In one short hour of ungoverned wrath you may do such damage as angels cannot make good. It is better to have control of the passions and to "possess one's soul in patience." And this is possible. Though you were born with an impetuous nature, you can conquer it by grace. Peter was by nature preëminently hot-headed. He became easily excited, and when in that state of mind was inclined to be violent. James and John were of the same disposition. They were justly called Boanerges or "the sons of thunder," for on one occasion they wanted to invoke fire from heaven to

destroy the inhabitants of an inhospitable village in Samaria. John afterwards became mild as an evening zephyr. His very name is to us now a synonym of tenderness and love. How was this great change effected? Not by his own efforts, but by the Spirit of God. Read the letter to the Galatians, and you will see how such a wonderful transformation is achieved. "This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, etc. But the fruit of the spirit is love, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." You cannot change yourself, but the Spirit of God can. If you submit yourself to be led by him, you will no longer be in the power of sin or under the condemnation of the law. It is as if the apostle had said: You must expect a struggle between flesh and spirit as long as you are in the world, but if, in the prevailing bent of your life, you be led by the Spirit—if you act under the guidance and government of that spiritual nature and disposition

which the Holy Spirit works in you—if you make the Word of God your rule, and the grace of God your principle—you will not be the slave of your passion; there will be such a change in you that these things will not greatly affect you.

And surely it is always best to be calm and self-possessed. The example of Paul, in that memorable shipwreck off the shores of Malta, is a fine illustration of this. The sailors had done everything that the navigation of that day suggested, but in vain. The ship seemed doomed to destruction. They were in a sore emergency. Despair laid hold of them and they thought of nothing but their own personal safety. And when all—to use a common expression—had “lost their heads,” one man retained his calmness and courage. The Christian prisoner then stepped forward, and, by his brave composure, inspired the men with confidence, so that they obeyed directions and finally reached the shore without the loss of a single life.

The same truth is exemplified daily by a hundred occurrences in our own surroundings. There was a fire not long ago. At the time of its discovery it was just a little blaze, but

there was tinder enough in its reach to produce a great conflagration. One man became excited and rushed aimlessly about talking loudly and gesticulating wildly. He accomplished nothing. The flame continued to spread unhindered. Another man appeared on the scene. He was calm as a marble statue. With the utmost composure he gave directions to his comrades, and in a short time the fire was extinguished. The news journals in every issue contain accounts of panics and their disastrous results. In some public assembly some one, either with or without cause, raises the cry of fire. In a moment the audience is overcome with fright and begins to stampede. Most dreadful consequences are impending, when some cool-headed speaker arises on the platform and by his tranquil demeanor and steady voice calls the people to their senses. His perfect self-control has saved the lives of many of his fellow citizens.

There are spiritual emergencies fraught with as great danger, both to one's self and others. There are times when men around us become greatly agitated. Some sudden frenzy lays hold of them, and they are liable to rush head-

long into moral danger, or to become dangerous themselves. In their mad career they become reckless and violent. There is need then of some one to be firm and reasonable, to utter a few deliberate and cautionary words and thus quiet the agitated spirits. It is always safest to be calm and circumspect even in the most trying emergencies. As the lamented Holmes said:

“Don’t catch the fidgets; you have found your place
Just in the focus of a nervous race,
Fretful to change, and rabid to discuss,
Full of excitements, always in a fuss.
Think of the patriarchs; then compare as men
These lean-cheeked maniacs of the tongue and pen!
Run like a man, but don’t be worked to death;
And with new notions—let me change the rule—
Don’t strike the iron till its slightly cool.”

We need Christ with us constantly. The dangers and temptations of life are many. We meet them on every hand and in various degrees. We cannot always conquer them by the Parthian warfare, namely, by running away. They must be met, and without the presence and help of the divine Savior we may be overcome. But his hand can defend us and his

nearness cheer us on. It should be remembered, however, that he will not come to us except we are in the pathway of duty. Peter wanted to walk on the water. There was no need of that. It was a venturesome and uncalled-for undertaking. He might just as well have remained in the ship or have taken a small boat to transport himself. He began to sink, and without the Savior's mercy would have perished. To court unnecessary danger is a great risk, and there is no promise of protection to those who presume to do it. Our commission is to do the will of the Father and to finish his work. If, in pursuance of that purpose, we encounter danger, we can rely on the help of God, otherwise not. Whatever perils seem to threaten us in the discharge of our duty, or in the pursuit of our calling, we need not fear them. The pastor and physician are called, by their vocation, to stand by the side of the sick bed, where the poisonous breath of contagion is wafted upon them. The carpenter must go to the top of the giddy scaffold, where one false, stumbling step may send him to destruction. The sailor must go out upon the watery deep, where the stormy billows may speedily engulf him.

The miner must go down into the bowels of the earth, where subterranean floods or gaseous explosions constantly threaten him. Yet if a man is conscientious and feels that he is doing the will of God, he need fear no evil. He is always in the hands of the Almighty. If he needlessly and in the spirit of mere bravado, exposes himself to danger, then, of course, he cannot count on divine protection. If, like Captain Webb, he throws himself into the whirlpool of the Niagara simply to give an exhibition of physical daring, then, like Webb, he will probably lose his life. If, like Ben Fuller, he leaps from the highest pinnacle of Tower Bridge down into the shallow Thames, a hundred and forty feet below him, simply to show his courage, then, like Fuller, he will probably meet his death. But if he has not willfully courted danger, if he has used all proper precaution, and observed all the rules of self-preservation, he can be of good cheer. Neither man nor devil can harm him then. Not even a hair can fall from his head contrary to the will of God. He can look into the future with the utmost confidence and say with David, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow

of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

We need to repeat and emphasize, in conclusion, the first lesson of this Scripture, namely, the importance of prayer. The Savior's course is well worthy of being carefully observed by us. He did not consider the time spent in prayer as wasted. An entire night was none too long for him to spend in retirement and devotion. He seemed the better prepared by it for the labors of the succeeding day. The men who have been strongest in prayer have always been bravest in action. England never had a better general than Havelock. And he never would allow himself to be robbed of the morning hour of devotion. No matter what the exigencies were he preëmpted his time for prayer. The most courageous soldier of modern times was General Gordon, or, as he was commonly called, "Chinese" Gordon. He was absolutely fearless of anyone but God, yet he was a saint, and prayed often and fervently. The little flag on his tent in the morning always indicated that he was upon his knees and would not be disturbed. One of the ablest statesmen of

the age is William Ewart Gladstone, "the grand old man." Yet, with all the press of public duties, he never neglects his private devotions. May we not rightly conclude that the piety and prayerfulness of these men stands related to their greatness as cause to effect? It is certain that the morning hour in the closet was no small factor in the honorable career of these and multitudes of others. Their lives should be to us an inspiration to be prayerful and live prayerfully. The old motto, "Work and pray" is a good one to adopt. Only we would reverse the order and make it, "Pray and work." Prayer is the more important of the two and should always come first. It is the best possible preparation for the duties of the day.

- "My God! is any hour so sweet,
From blush of morn to evening star,
As that which calls me to thy feet—
The hour of prayer.
- "Words cannot tell what blest relief
Here from my every want I find,
What strength for warfare, balm for grief;
What peace of mind.
- "Hushed is each doubt; gone every fear;
My spirit seems in heaven to stay.
And e'en the penitential tear
Is wiped away."

“Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished.

“For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

“And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.”—LUKE XVIII: 31-34.

XV.

THE SAVIOR'S PASSION.

WE are now in that season of the church year which the calendar designates as Lent. It comprises the forty days preceding Easter, and is observed in memory of and out of respect to the sufferings of Christ. There are those who believe that it was instituted by the apostles. For this, however, there is no authority. History clearly establishes that it is of ecclesiastical institution, and consequently not binding upon us in its requirements.

The manner in which this period of devotion is observed by a great many people is deserving of criticism. They seem to look upon it as a kind of expiation for previous negligence. All the rest of the year they feel free to pursue pleasure and engage in various amusements, some of them even of a rather questionable character. Especially in the weeks preceding

Lent do they make the rounds of fashionable entertainments, throw themselves with abandon into the open arms of frivolity, and apparently strive to crowd the greatest possible amount of secularism and dissipation into that privileged season. Then suddenly they drop into a period of abstinence, which suggests the suspicion that it is an attempt to make satisfaction for previous digressions.

Yet this is only the abuse of an intrinsically commendable arrangement. As a voluntary and sincere testimonial of reverence for a suffering Savior, as a time of scrupulous self-examination and contrition for sin, the observance of Lent is of virtue. It does not exclude daily thought upon the great scheme of redemption and our relation to it, but simply encourages a deeper sense of obligation and gratitude to the divine love than usual.

Among God's chosen people of old there were such seasons of seriousness. When Israel had sinned against Jehovah, and he punished them with pestilence or famine, a fast was proclaimed throughout the land so that the people might humble themselves before God

and he, perchance, might spare them. At such times all wordly joy was banished, the appetites were denied and the members mortified. The penitents girded sackcloth about their loins, strewed ashes upon their heads and sat down in the dust. The whole nation had but one cry, namely, "God have mercy upon us, and remove this plague."

Far more solemn than this, however, is the Lenten season of the Christian church. It calls to remembrance the greatest sin ever committed, the crucifixion of the Son of God, the cruel torturing of the innocent, mild-hearted Jesus. It reminds us also of the greatest love ever manifested toward man, and the vicarious atonement for our guilt by the Redeemer's passion and death. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." This certainly is reason for fasting and penitence. This fully warrants a period of devout meditation upon the tragic close of the Savior's life. And what an edifying thought it is that during these weeks, well-nigh all Christendom bows in grief and looks adoringly toward Calvary:

that in these days not one nation but many nations, the whole race of God's people upon the earth, are considering that important event that transpired eighteen hundred years ago. We lift up our eyes toward the sun at noon-day and are impressed with the thought that myriads of other men are gazing at that same orb, and that it is the constant cynosure of millions of our race. Yet there is one event in the world's history which attracts far more attention than even that day-star on high. It is the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. From every age and from every quarter of the universe multitudes of the redeemed, their hearts filled with gratitude and their eyes brimming with love, are looking upon Golgotha. We are never alone in contemplating the cross of Calvary, for it is the most conspicuous object in the universe, the central point of the church militant as well as the church triumphant.

I. The text presents us the Master before his crucifixion, gathering his disciples around him and calling upon them to go with him to Jerusalem. And as the Lord at that time

took his followers into his confidence and told them of the dreadful experience awaiting him, so now he communicates to the whole church his approaching humiliation and sorrow, and asks every Christian to be with him in spirit, and to consider seriously his great agony. It is but meet, therefore, that we should be sympathetic and translate ourselves into a real passion mood. Should anyone ask, "What is that? How can I acquire that frame of mind?" I answer: If you can truly feel that all the solemn transactions of the Savior, at the close of his eventful career, were in your stead and in your interest; if you can sincerely say, "For me Christ prayed in the garden; for me he was tried; for me he was scourged and spit upon; for me he dragged the heavy cross to Golgotha; for me he went into hellish torment of soul and body, and for me he died"—if you can say this, then you are in a real passion mood; then these weeks of Lent will be to you a blessing; then you will deny yourself of every sensual pleasure, and resolve that you will have no earthly joy in these days when the Savior was so sorrowful. And this

is what the church demands of you now, abstinence from the world, and absorption into the spirit of humility and penitence.

The beginning of the Master's sufferings was an important crisis in his life. His heart must have palpitated with anxiety and his voice have trembled with emotion. He says to the apostles, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem." For three years Christ had journeyed through the land, teaching the ignorant, encouraging the despondent, sustaining the weak, and dropping blessings upon the heads of the unfortunate. His name was a household word. The people cherished the highest hopes, and expected him to become their ruler and deliverer. But now his earthly star is waning. A dark, portentous cloud hangs over him. He goes for the last time to the capital of the country, and desires the disciples to go with him that they may be witnesses of his conduct. But they are suspicious of evil and have no inclination to go into that hotbed of Jewish bigotry. They remind him of the treatment he had received there, of the Pharisees who had threatened to stone him, and try to persuade him to remain

aloof. Yet Thomas, more resolute than the others, finally says, "Let us go and die with him."

This same request of the Savior comes to us to-day in a spiritual sense. The question for us to decide is, "Will we go? Will we make the journey to that ancient city?" Consider well before you reach a conclusion. Reflect upon the nature of the visit. There will be no mirth and no merry-making. It will not be a delightful spring excursion. There will be nothing attractive to the eye or pleasing to the flesh. At Jerusalem you will see all manner of abominations. There are men in every stage of wickedness, from the red-handed murderer on the throne, to the basest wretch among the rabble. There is about to be committed the most awful of tragedies. If you love the world, you will not go. If your heart cleaves to pleasure, you will not go. In Jerusalem are only pain and tears and blood. Instead of gayety and revelry there are groans and lamentations. Everything must be fulfilled which was written by the prophets. The amiable Jesus, our Savior and friend, must be "stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." The guilt of a rebellious race he must carry upon

his innocent shoulders. The righteous wrath of an offended God toward his wayward creatures he must endure. And what that means no tongue can tell. To suffer the consequences of that sin which God hates with a relentless hatred, is an experience of unspeakable woe. The sting of a single transgression is exceedingly bitter; but the effect of the accumulated iniquity of an entire race is incomputable.

We gain a faint conception of this accursed thing when we look at Jehovah's treatment of it at various times. In the smiling garden of Eden dwells a lovely parent pair, the first from God's creative hand. They yield for once to the seductive plea of evil, and swift retribution comes upon them. The fair paradise is blasted with mildew, the flowers fade, and the guilty ones are banished from its gates by the angel's flaming sword.

Two thousand years later the world is steeped in sin to such an extent that among millions but one righteous man remains. The Lord is filled with indignation and refuses to strive any longer with the spirit of man. He draws back the bolts of heaven, and the

floods pour down from above; he opens the fountains of the great deep, and the waters well up from beneath. The deluge covers the earth, so that men and women sink beneath its shoreless waves to rise no more.

We read of the citizens of Sodom that they were sinful exceedingly, that the voice of their iniquity cried up from the ground. And God did not fail to manifest his displeasure. With the eye of the spirit we see his avenging hand raised in their destruction. We see the fire descend from heaven like one vast sheet of flame. We see forks of lightning flashing down into the accursed city. We hear the shrieks of the people who are caught in the fiery conflagration. Our ears echo with the howling of the tortured beasts, as they hasten to escape the impending doom. We see the last breath of life extinct, and then, with a sudden convulsion, the heavy waters of the Dead Sea deluged upon this chaos and desolation, to hide it from the eye of God and man to this day.

Reflect upon these awful consequences of sin and you will have some idea of the Savior's sorrow and agony at Jerusalem. Remember, also, that these visitations were but the punish-

ment of one age or one nation, while Christ bore the penalty of all ages and of all nations. If a part only of human guilt was so terrible in its effects, what must have been the combined force of the whole! All the sins which God saw in those ancient people when he rained destruction upon them, he saw multiplied a thousand times as he looked upon his Son on that sad Friday morning. All the sins that man ever committed rested upon the shoulders of Jesus, because he was truly man, because he was a voluntary victim in our stead, because he stepped in between our nature that was to be destroyed and the arm of the Father uplifted for retribution. Remember that the strokes of divine justice that would have ruined you and me and sunk us into the pit of perdition, were showered by the hand of God upon our Lord Jesus Christ. If you go up to Jerusalem in faith this is what you will witness, and if you go in the right mood it cannot but solemnize you and be a source of blessing to you.

II. But again, we should ask, what is the cause and the import of this suffering? Not

only *for whom*, but *why* all this? We should seek to comprehend the mystery better. The disciples did not understand Jesus when he spoke to them of approaching events. His remarks were a riddle to them until after the resurrection, when the Spirit descended, opened their minds and guided them into all truth. So there are many Christians now who do not understand the passion of the Master. It is to them a mystery. If they comprehended it in all its bearings they would be filled with reverence and amazement, and would sink before the cross in devout adoration, saying, "The cause of this suffering are we. The object of this agony is our redemption."

When we consider the crucifixion of Christ we probably think only of the Jews who killed him, and inwardly load them with our maledictions because of their inhuman conduct. Yet they could not have done that without divine permission, for Christ said, "No man taketh my life from me, I lay it down of myself." It was our transgressions that produced the necessity of his sacrifice. We are all to blame. When Achan was convicted of crime, Joshua gave word that every man of the Jew-

ish nation should take a stone in his hand and fling it at him. Then the people of Israel came and stoned him to death. So every son of man, from Adam down to the last that shall be born on the earth, every human being that ever breathed the breath of God's creation in this world, was there in that dreadful hour to throw his sins upon the defenseless form of Christ. There is none who can justly say, "Jesus did not die for me. Had it been left to my option he would never have been slain." Christ bore the iniquity of every one of us. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." What an infinite debt of gratitude every Christian owes the Savior for his voluntary sufferings in our stead!

Would that I had the speech of the golden-mouthed Chrysostom. Would that I could adequately portray the depth of the Savior's agony. It would not fail to produce appreciation and grateful recognition. I would begin to tell of his entrance into the gloomy solitude of Gethsemane's garden, where he went a little distance from his favorite

apostles, knelt down and prayed. And what did he pray? "Oh, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." "He saw the great army of sins closing around him. He saw the pit of hell open before him, and its busy demons preparing for the conflict. For a moment his heart quavered and he cried for relief. But soon he summoned his courage and said, 'Not my will but thine be done.' Then he turned and bared his innocent bosom, put out his sinless arms, and allowed the flood of iniquity to roll in upon him and overwhelm him. All the lusts and wickedness of men, all the impurities and idolatries of ungodly nations, all the sins that ever appeared under the eye of God's anger, fell upon him like the waves of the ocean coming in and falling upon a solitary man who kneels alone upon the shore. As he rises, methinks, he can scarcely recognize himself. His hands that he had lifted up in prayer are now red with ten thousand deeds of blood, for all the crimes of the race were transferred to him. He sees within himself all the hideous forms of sin and of consequent miseries that have ever existed, all the

desolation and ruin, broken hearts and weeping eyes of the ages. He hears all the sobs and groans and filthy blasphemies that have come from human lips since the fall. It is an experience he can scarcely endure. It weakens him. He sinks to the earth writhing in agony. The blood oozes from the pores of his body and reddens his garments like his who has trodden the wine press." We placed him there, your sins and mine, and the sins of humanity. Yet was there one son of man that bowed down by the side of that prostrate form and whispered a word of sympathy and consolation into his ear. He found his most intimate disciples asleep and said to them, "What, can ye not watch with me one hour?" "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death." Such was the Savior's condition when the false, penurious Judas tracked him through the darkness of the night and gave him the treacherous kiss. He is dragged by rude men to the high priest's palace, and thence to Pilate's court. There the soldiers scourge him until his body is fearfully lacerated. Then they amuse themselves at his kingly pretensions, put a faded purple robe upon

him, a crown of thorns upon his brow, and a reed into his hand in mockery of royalty. In answer to Pilate's question they cry, "He is not our king. We have no king but Cæsar. Crucify him, crucify him." With Pilate's unwilling consent the cross is placed upon his shoulders, and he toils away toward Calvary. The burden, however, is too great for his weakened frame, and he totters to the earth. Another with stronger limbs carries it to the brow of the hill. What there transpired you know. To give an adequate description of that day's experience is impossible. I will not speak of the crucifixion or attempt to tell what was implied in that awful cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The final hour comes when he gives up the ghost, and the spirit, from its incumbrance of clay, rises out of the black flood of torture into the hands of the Father. Ought we not be grateful and say with the poet,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all."

III. Again we may ask, "To what does this suffering bind us?" If Jesus desired to accomplish our welfare thereby, we ought gladly to accept its results. It demands of us faith. "Whosoever believeth in me shall not perish, but have everlasting life." This faith is a firm trust in the merits of Christ, a living confidence that "there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved." It obligates us to put aside all self-righteousness, all spiritual pride, and that vain notion that we can be saved by our own merit. Whatever pride may say, it is still true that "there is no other name by which we can be saved." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The suffering of Jesus binds us to give our hearts to him, so that he alone may dwell in us, and we may say with Paul, "I live, yet not I, but God in me." The suffering of Jesus binds us to lay off sin. When we remember that sin is the cause of all this pain, how can we desire to continue it. The Roman Catholic church lays much stress upon fasting. Its members are required to abstain from certain kinds of food during

this season. Such abstinence is not of much importance. The principal thing is to abstain from sin. The sufferings of Christ bind us in all our sorrows to flee to him for refuge. We ought to be thankful that we can go to him, and that he has said, "Come unto me." He is ready to receive us under all circumstances. He had compassion on us in the greatest of all our dangers and interposed on our behalf. He certainly will not forget us now. Whatever trial or heartache we may have, we can go to him and he will either remove it or give us grace sufficient to bear it.

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